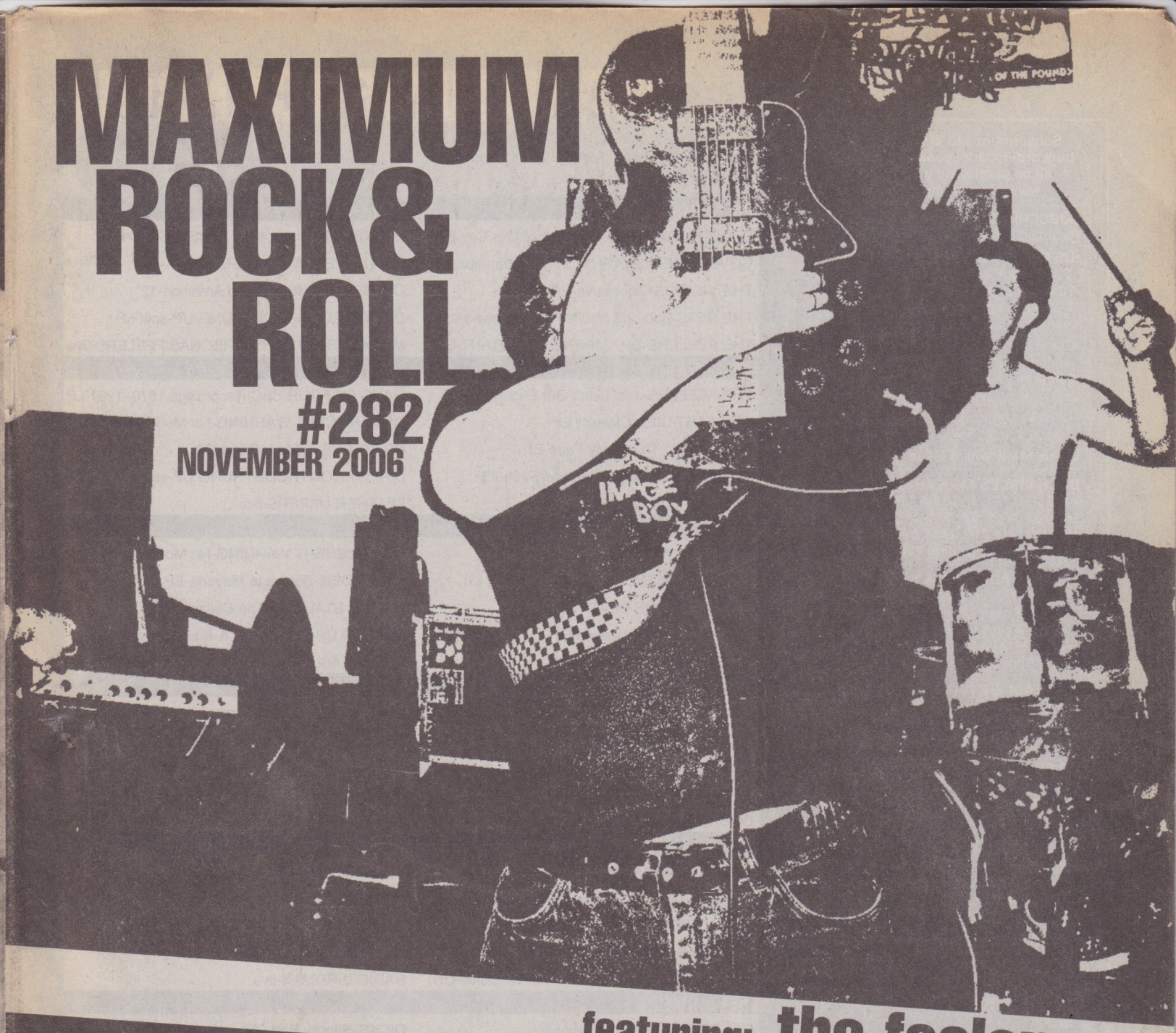
MAXIMUM ROCK& ROLL

#282
NOVEMBER 2006



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- Everywhere else: $10 each (air). 12 issue sub for $110 (airmail only). 6 issue sub for $57 (airmail only).

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BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE:
#148, 150-151, 153-154, 156 pts. 1 & 2, 160-163, 166, 172, 174-175, 179-181, 184-210, 214-216, 218-227, 229-281
See page 4 for pricing and other info.

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1/6 page: (2.5" x 5") $30
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AD DEADLINE (with payment) is the 15th of the month. Issue comes out by the 2nd week of following month, and the cover date is the month after that.

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TOP 10

For what it's worth, here's some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

TIM BROOKS

- GIANT HAYSTACKS-A Rebirth of Our City-EP
- GOVERMNENT WARNING-No Moderation-LP
- THE VICIOUS-Obsessive-EP
- THE PETS-Baby It's You/No Pets Allowed-45
- THE FEELERS-EP / MINDLESS MUTANT-EP
- FUCKED UP-Black Army & Black Cross-EPs
- NO FUCKER-Maelstrom-EP
- COLDBRINGER-Lust and Ambition-12"
- DIRECT CONTROL/STRUNG UP-split LP
- MINDLESS MUTANT/CARBONAS/FEELERS-live

MITCH CARDWELL

- THE FEELERS-Just Can't Get Enough-EP
- LIVE FAST DIE/VCR-split EP
- BOYS CLUB-This Is My Face-EP
- IMAGINARY ICONS-Eye-cons/Fade-45
- LIVE FAST DIE/VCR-split EP
- GANG OF FOUR-BBC Recordings 1979–1981-LP
- GOVERMNENT WARNING-No Moderation-LP
- CRETEENS-4 Track Blues-EP
- DIRECT CONTROL/STRUNG UP-split LP
- LEATHER UPPERS-live

ROB COONS

- MINDLESS MUTANT-Without-EP
- DIRECT CONTROL/STRUNG UP-split LP
- CONQUEST FOR DEATH-EP
- THE VICIOUS-Obsessive-EP
- NO FUCKER-Maelstrom-EP
- GOVERMNENT WARNING-No Moderation-LP
- SIN ORDEN-Somos la Mayoria-EP
- ITALIAN STALLION-The Collapze-EP
- FUCKED UP-Black Army & Black Cross-EPs
- VERBAL ABUSE-Just an American Band-12"

PAUL CURRAN

- GIANT HAYSTACKS-A Rebirth of Our City-EP
- FUN 100/PAPER LANTERNS-split EP
- JESUS FUCKING CHRIST-Cold Day in Hell-LP
- DIRECT CONTROL/STRUNG UP-split LP
- COBRA SKULLS-Draw Muhammad-CD
- LOVE SONGS-Behind Enemy Lines in G# Minor-CD
- THE ANSWER LIES/TULSA-split EP
- SUBMARINE RACES-Wire Taps-EP
- FUCK ME DEAD-Circling Dead-EP
- THE AGENDA-Articulation-EP

JONATHAN FLOYD

- THE VICIOUS-Obsessive-EP
- GIANT HAYSTACKS-A Rebirth of Our City-EP
- THE AGENDA-Articulation-EP
- THE PETS-Baby It's You/No Pets Allowed-45
- RIVER CITY TANLINES-I'm Your Negative-CD
- TEENAGE HARLETS-Up the Fixx-LP
- FUCK ME DEAD-Circling Dead-EP
- CONQUEST FOR DEATH-EP
- LEATHER UPPERS-live
- RADIO BIRDMAN-live

LAYLA GIBBON

- RAT TRAPS-Complications-EP
- MARGARET THRASHER-EP
- GOVERNMENT WARNING-No Moderation-LP
- MINDLESS MUTANT-Without-EP
- GIANT HAYSTACKS-A Rebirth of Our City-EP
- DICKS-Hungry Butt-CD
- FUCK ME DEAD-Circling Dead-EP
- DIRECT CONTROL/STRUNG UP-split LP
- V/A-Underground Tajikistan-LP / V/A-Paxta Core-LP
- MIKA MIKO-live in West Oakland

CHRIS HUBBARD

- DIRECT CONTROL/STRUNG UP-split LP
- THE AGENDA-Articulation-EP
- THE VICIOUS-Obsessive-EP
- GIANT HAYSTACKS-A Rebirth of Our City-EP
- MINDLESS MUTANT-Without-EP
- GANG OF FOUR-BBC Recordings 1979–1981-LP
- FUCKED UP-Black Army-EP
- GOVERMENT WARNING-No Moderation-LP
- ROTTER!-Over Alt!-EP
- BLANK STARE-Suicide-EP

KENNY KAOS

- YOUNG PEOPLE WITH FACES-LP
- THE JONESES-Tits and Champagne-12"
- MALAKAS-Too Good to Be True...-2xLP
- THE ELECTRIC KISSES-Full Beach Kicks-LP
- TEENAGE HARLETS-Up the Fixx-LP
- BOYS CLUB-This Is My Face-EP
- THE VICIOUS-Obsessive-EP
- FUN 100/PAPER LANTERNS-split EP
- PRICKS/SPROUTS-split EP
- TREND-Patientenverfugung-EP

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TOP 10

Please send two copies of vinyl or CD-only releases to the address on the previous page. See Demos section for where to send tapes & CD-Rs.

CAROLYN KEDDY

- THE VICIOUS-Obsessive-EP
- GIANT HAYSTACKS-A Rebirth of Our City-EP
- THE PETS-Baby It's You/No Pets Allowed-45
- THE FEELERS-Just Can't Get Enough-EP
- VIOLENTLY ILL-Where's the Next Wave?-EP
- RAT TRAPS-EP / AL KAPOTT-Discography-LP
- LIVE FAST DIE/VCR-split EP
- YOUNG PEOPLE WITH FACES-LP
- THEE MIDNITERS-In Thee Midnite Hour!-CD
- RADIO BIRDMAN-live

WILL KINSER

- TREND-EP / THE JONESES-12"
- DIRECT CONTROL / STRUNG UP – split LP
- GANG OF FOUR-LP
- CONQUEST FOR DEATH-EP
- PISSCHRIST-Nothing Has Changed-LP
- COLDBRINGER-Lust and Ambition-12"
- GOVERNMENT WARNING-No Moderation-LP
- APOCALIPSTIX-War in My Head-EP
- THE VICIOUS-Obsessive-EP / HELLSHOCK-live
- RADIO BIRDMAN-live / THE DETONATORS-live

RAY LUJAN

- LATTERMAN-...We Are Still Alive-CD
- DREADFUL CHILDREN-Dot to Dot...-CD
- THE TAKE-Dolomite-CD / RADIO DAYS-CD
- STRIKE ANYWHERE-Dead FM-CD
- THE VICIOUS-EP / DCOI!-The Bleeding-EP
- ELECTRIC KISSES-LP / TEENAGE HARLETS-LP
- FIFTH HOUR HERO-CD / THE COPYRIGHTS-CD
- FUN 100/PAPER LANTERNS-split EP
- SCREAMPLAY-EP / TEENAGE HARLETS-LP
- GORILLA BISCUITS/HARD-ONS/RADIO BIRDMAN-live

ALLAN MCNAUGHTON

- DECONDITIONED-Big Act/Compartment K3-45
- LOSER LIFE-Things Will Never Change-45
- CONQUEST FOR DEATH-EP
- COLDBRINGER-12" / FUCKED UP-EP
- IMAGINARY ICONS-Eye-cons/Fade-45
- LOVE SONGS-Behind Enemy Lines in G# Minor-CD
- THE VICIOUS-Obsessive-EP / THE PETS-45
- THE ANSWER LIES/TULSA-split EP
- FIRE DON'T CARE-Be What You Are-CD
- GANG OF FOUR-BBC Recordings 1979–1981-LP

GOLNAR NIKPOUR

- GIANT HAYSTACKS-EP & cassette
- GOVERNMENT WARNING-No Moderation-LP
- DICKS-Hungry Butt-CD
- V/A-Underground Tajikistan & V/A-Paxta Core LPs
- MINDLESS MUTANT-EP / FUCK ME DEAD-EP
- RAT TRAPS-Complications-EP
- DIRECT CONTROL/STRUNG UP-split LP
- MARGARET THRASHER-Are You There God?...-EP
- *Fag School* #1 & 2
- MIKA MIKO-live

BRUCE ROEHRS

- DIRECT CONTROL/STRUNG UP-split LP
- MARGARET THRASHER-EP
- RAT TRAPS-EP / MINDLESS MUTANT-EP
- NO FUCKER-Maelstrom-EP
- GOVERNMENT WARNING-LP
- PRICKS / SPROUTS – split EP
- CONQUEST FOR DEATH-EP
- THE CANCER KIDS-The Possible Dream-LP
- HELLSHOCK/WARTORN-live
- TEMPLARS/FED UP/STEP 2 FAR/HAMMERLOCK-live

RYAN WELLS

- DICKS-Hungry Butt-CD
- ORDER-Strokes vs. New York-7"
- FUCK ME DEAD-Circling Dead-EP
- BOYS CLUB-This Is My Face-EP
- RAT TRAPS-Complications-EP
- GOBBLINZ-CD
- GIANT HAYSTACKS-A Rebirth of Our City-EP
- THE JONESES-Tits and Champagne-12"
- THE VICIOUS-Obsessive-EP
- THE FEELERS-Just Can't Get Enough-EP

ZINE TOP TEN

- *Beat Sheet* #1
- *The CIA Makes Science Fiction Interesting* #4
- *Cutlass* #10
- *Dig It* #37
- *Down with the Driver* #1
- *Fag School* #1 & 2
- *Major Malfunction* #5
- *Punx is Ladies*
- *Re/Fuse* #5
- *Seven Inches to Freedom* #3

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A WHOLE CRAPLOAD OF MRR BACK ISSUES...

#150/Nov '95. NY Loose, Snap-Her, Sick Boys, Splatterheads, Pipe, Pregnant Man, Final Conflict, Rawness, Stink, Goblins, Smellie Fingers.

#153/Feb '96. Snort, Hatchetface, Little Ugly Girls, ADZ, Oxymoron, NOTA, Stun Guns, Surfin' Turnips, Gutfiddle, Karen Monster, Dimestore Haloes.

#154/Mar '96. Motards, Subincision, Stisism, Donnas, Stallions, Count Backwards.

#156 pt 1/May '96. Public Toys, Crunch, Peter & The Test Tube Babies, Nails Of Hawaiian, Splash 4, Yawp!, Lifetime, Sickoids.

#156 pt 2/May '96. Australian Special: Beanflipper, Melancholy, Blitz Babiez, Crank, SubRosa, Mindsnare, TMT, H-Block, B-Sides, Fallout, Frenzal Rhomb, Lawnsmell, One Inch Punch, Chickenshit, No Deal.

#160/Sept '96. Automatics, Boycot, Toast, Morning Shakes, Mormons, John Q. Public, Sex Offenders, Ballgagger, Business, Apocalypse Babys, Good Riddance.

#161/Oct '96. Jet Bumpers, Steel Miners, Divisia, Lopo Drido, Red #9, Nothing Cool, Sink, Sires, Newtown Grunts.

#162/Nov '96. Phantom Surfers, Candy Snatchers, the Stain, National Guard, Torches To Rome, Restos Fosiles, Two Bo's Maniacs, Snuka, Redemtion 87, Torture Kitty.

#163/Dec '96. Last Sons of Krypton, Prostitutes, Wig Hat, Boys, Let It Rock, Enemy Soil, Vulcaneers, Half Empty, Zeros, Deadcats, Teen Idles.

#166/Mar '97. Walking Abortions, Hickey, '77 Spreads, Sanity Assassins, Cards In Spokes, Joey Tampon & The Toxic Shocks, Adjective Noun, Suicide King, Lenguas Armadas, Trauma, De Crew.

#175/Dec '97. One Man Army, Those Unknown, Boiling Man, Piao Chong, Exploding Crustaceans, Last Year's Youth, Heartdrops, Dirty Burds, Dimestore Haloes.

#179/April '98. Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyls, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

#180/May '98. Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

#181/June '98. Grapefruit, Druggies, DDI, Bonecrusher, Normals, All Bets Off, Stiletto Boys, Summerjack, Cell Block 5.

#184/Sept '98. Absentees, Devoid of Faith, UXA, Umlaut, Four Letter Word, Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Ricanstruction, Libertine, Indecision, Snarkout Boys.

#185/Oct '98. Traitors, Wimpy Dicks, Armed & Hammered, Dylan McKays, NME, Tezacrifco, Worm, Roswells, Raxola, Beatnik Termites.

#186/Nov '98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#187/Dec '98. Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, 3rd Party, No Class.

#188/Jan '99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/Feb '99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/Mar '99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April '99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#192/May '99. Los Crudos, Burning Kitchen, Henry Fiat's Open Sore, Polythene, Kangaroo Recs.

#193/June '99. Munster Recs, DS-13, Safety Pins, Pussycats, Piolines, False Alarm, Darlington, Bad Stain, Bodies, Houseboy, Mullets.

#194/July '99. Deathreat, Last Match, God Hates Computers, Fokkewolf, Flesh Eating Creeps, Aside, Hoppin' Mad, Kid Dynamite, Thee Outcasts.

#195/Aug '99. Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres.

#196/Sept '99. Hopscotch, Catharsis, Orchid, The Pricks, Grissle, Product X, Reaching Forward, Emerge, Third Degree, "Epicenter Zone '90-'99".

#197/Oct '99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

#198/Nov '99. Hail Mary, Pressure Point, Bump 'N Uglies, The Victims, A//Political, Outlast

#199/Dec '99. Locust, Ratos de Porao, USV, Razlog Za, G-3, Swarm, WHN?, Mt. St. Helens, Black Cat Music, Enemy Soil.

#200/Jan '00. American Steel, Curse, Gee Vaucher, Hers Never Existed, Aaron Cometbus, Active distro, Toxic Narcotic, MRR catalogue #100-200.

#201/Feb '00. Beerzone, Towards An End, Daybreak, "Best Punk Singles of the '90s," the WTO riots in Seattle.

#202/March '00. KTMWQ, Real Estate Fraud, Strike Out, Broken Rekids, the Haggard, GC5, Gore Gore Girls, the Catheters.

#203/April '00. Spazz, Slang, *Slug & Lettuce* zine, *Suburban Voice* zine, As We Once Were, Red Angel Dragnet, Four Letter Words, Slampt Records, the Wednesdays, the Fuses.

#204/May '00. Cocksparrer, Talk Is Poison, Red Scare, Put Downs, Out Cold, Geraldine, Michael Knight, CBGaV, Pillage People.

#205/June '00. Punks With Kids special. Skudz, 50 Million, Legion, Wilbur Cobb, Coalition.

#206/July '00. Drunk, ESL, Ambition Mission, Lord High Fixers, Cripple Bastards, Dig Dug, Federation X, Amulet, Valentine Killers.

#207/Aug '00. Harum Scarum, Raw Power, Unseen, Pekinska Patka, Hudson Falcons, Dementia 13, Confine, Allergic to Whores.

#208/Sept '00. Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City, Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

#209/Oct '00. Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

#210/Nov '00. J Church, Profane Existence, Pezz, Pre-Teens, Templars, This Machine Kills, Subtonix, OB.

#214/Mar '01. Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

#215/April '01. No Means No, Vitamin X, Injections, Y, Dils, Last In Line, Don Austin, Deranged Records

#216/May '01. Propagandhi, Angelic Upstarts, Discordance Axis, Ruination, Photographer: Chris Boarts, Strap-Ons, Lynnards Innards

#218/July '01. Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

#221/Oct '01. The G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B'67.

#222/Nov '01. Dios Hastio, Tragedy, Four Letter Word, *Salad Days* author Charles Romalotti, Very Metal, Maurice's Little Bastards, the Rotters, MDC Brazilian tour diary, the Cravats, JR Ewing, Dutch scene report, extended news section, "Globalization Rhetoric & Reality,"

#223/Dec '01. "US Policy in the Middle East," "Revisiting 1948," Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Bluebloods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg. 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

#224/Jan '02. "Legislation Since Sept. 11, Rendencion 9.11, Metro Youth, Severed Head of State, Piranhas, Paraf, Backstabbers, Inc, An Albatross, Citizen Fish Tour, SPAM Records, the Virus, Action Time.

#225/Feb '02. Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86'd, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

#226/Mar '02. Queer punk special issue. Vaseline, Quails, Skinjobs, Italian queer punk report, Vaginal Davis, Feelings on a Grid, Sissies, Scott Free, Dumba, Columns.

#227/Apr '02. Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

#229/June '02. Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

#230/July '02. Bitchin', Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

#231/Aug '02. Epoxies, Puppy Vs. Dyslexia, Koro, Blocko, Amdi Petersen's Armé, Piss & Vinegar Zine, Schizophrenic Records, Toys That Kill, Give Us Barabbas, Dirt.

#232/Sept '02. "No Future" article, Lost, Fartz, Sell Outs, Razors Edge, Stakeout, Dillinger Four, All or Nothing HC, Fleshies, Bridge Nine Records, Akashic Books, Liberty.

#233/Oct '02. "All Ages" article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon's Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

#234/Nov '02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead.

#235/Dec '02. Anti-war Special Issue. Articles: "Reading for Democracy," "War on Iraq?" "Unfinished American Revolution," Resource Guide, "US Involvement in Iraq,""Axis of Empire." Long Island DIY Scene, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour part 2, Smalltown, Kylesa, Crash & Burn.

#236/Jan '03. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, *Artcore*, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

#238/Mar '03. World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilently Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

#239/Apr '03. Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

#240/May '03. I Quit, Apers, Headless Horsemen, Lesser of Two, Barse, Nightmare, Music Zine Roundtable, Exploding Hearts, Flesh Packs, Blacklist Brigade.

#241/June '03. Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

#242/July '03. Pensacola & San Francisco punk protest reports, John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, *Snakepit* zine , Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

#243/Aug '03. "Media Alliance and the FCC," Striking Distance, Malcontents, Invisible City, Books Lie, Charm City Art Space, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, I Shot Cyrus, Sunday Morning Einsteins, What the Kids Want, Onion Flavored Rings.

#244/Sept '03. None More Black, Deadline, Rai Ko Ris, Boxed In, Exploding Hearts, Raving Mojos, Blackout Terror, Morticia's Lovers, Thee Fine Lines, *Trust* zine.

#245/Oct '03. No Time Left, Riistetyt, Intense Youth, The Gimmies, Ass End Offend, Artimus Pyle, La Fraction, Kung Fu Rick, The Horror.

#246/Nov '03. Punk & Resistance in Israel, Letters from Palestine, No Choice, FM Knives, Bury the Living, Marked Men, The Dirty Burds, Provoked.

#247/Dec '03. DSB, The Boils, Popular Shapes, Phoenix Foundation, Bathtub Shitter, Meet the Virus, Cropknox, "Punk Babies on Tour" Article.

#248/Jan '04. Discharge, Superhelicopter, Jed Whitey, Black Friday '29, Find Him And Kill Him, The Lids, Impratical Cockpit, Face Up To It, History Of Maximum Rocknroll Radio.

#249/Feb '04. From Ashes Rise, Hagar the Womb, This Is My Fist, Skip Jensen, Gride, Katy Otto/Mike Taylor Dialogue, John Yates, Pointing Finger.

#250/Mar '04. Best Records of 2003, Miami FTAA protests, Clorox Girls, FIYA, "La Villita: Chicago Pilsen Scene," Terminus Victor, Restarts, Damage Done, Knights of New Crusade.

#251/April '04. The Fuse!, Väkivaltaa, Modern Machines, Microcosm, Migra Violenta Euro tour diary, Allegiance, Neurotic Swingers, Xavier Lepaige Photos, Le Scrawl,Vrah.

#252/May '04. Fucked Up, Firestarter, Inepsy, Laukaus, Great Clearing Off, Radio Reelers, Extreme Noise Records, 46 Short, The State, John The Baker, Free Verse, Chrystaei Branchaw photos.

#253/June '04. Sweet J.A.P., Gorilla Angreb, Vöetsek, Minority Blues Band, Scruvy Dogs, Molotov Cocktail, Kidnappers, Schifosi, King Ly Chee, YDI.

#254/July '04. No Hope For The Kids, Dropdead, Diskords, Breakfast, Asschapel, I Excuse, Strung Up, To Hell & Back, Four Eyes, Lamant, Gammits MW, scene reports from Portland, Boston and Germany.

#255/Aug '04. "Punk's Not Dead, Reagan Is" Special Issue. Leatherface, Get It Away, The Hatepinks, Keen Monkey Work, New York City, South Dakota, Czech Republic, Philippines, Russia.

#256/Sep '04. The Observers, Witchhunt, Annihilation Time, Zann, Eskapo, FxPxO, Haymarket Riot, Fourth Rotor, Les Georges Lenigrad, Texas scene, Newfoundland, Indiana, England.

#257/Oct '04 The Election Issue, Jesse Townley, Matt Gonzalez, Rattus, Fighting Dogs, Hero Dishonest, Kickz, The Boss Martians, Reactionary Three, Slovakia, Australia, South Wales, South East Asia.

#258/Nov '04. Career Suicide, Cathy Wilkerson of the Weather Underground, No Fucker, The Repos, Dominatrix, Ashtray, Deadstop, Midnight Creeps, Michale Graves, The Diffs, The Shemps, Abi Yo Yo's.

#259/Dec '04. Bad Business, Penelope Houston, Rambo, AI, Ass, I Attack, The Krunchies, A-Lines, Insurgence Records, The Hates, Accidents, Massgrav, The Critics, Merciless Game, SF Hotel Workers Strike, photos from Japan, SoCal & the Bay Area.

#260/Jan '05. Technocracy, The Total End, Only Crime, True North, Partisans, For The Worst, Dick Spikie, Straight to Hell, Black Cross, Action, Ergs, Rusty Nails, Queer Activism in London, Greg Shaw tribute, John Peel tribute, "Andrew "Stig" Sewell tribute, Beijing punk photos.

#261/Feb '05. Year End Top Tens, Riistetyt, Lost Cherrees, Complete Control, Cheap Sex, Gasoline Please, Beerzone, Greyskull, MOTO, Water Into Beer Fanzine, Swe-Punk scumpit, Japan punk photos, Bay Area punk photos, Texas, Russia, and Malaysia scene reports.

#262/March '05. Kärnvapen Attack, Neo Boys, Catholic Boys, Dead Moon, Wreckage, Frantix, Armitage Shanks, Wendy Kroys, To What End?, Cell Block 5, Bent Outta Shape, Ah-Nah Tron, Slovakia, Indonesia, and Illinois scenes.

#263/April '05. All Crusties Spending Loud Night 2004, Bombenalarm, Battleship, APA, The Black Lips, Words That Burn, Flamingo 50, The Low Budgets, Mellakka, I Object, Antisect, Bay Area scene report, South Coast UK scene report.

#264/May '05. Crime, Love Songs, Bruce Banner, Intent, The Holy Mountain, Have Heart, The Bill Bondsmen, The Real Losers, archive photos, Bay Area scene photos, Taiwan and Rochester scene reports.

#265/June '05. Endless Nightmare, Hard Skin, Kolokol, Amebix, Transistor Transistor, The Safes, The Detonators, Finland scene report, France scene report, SoCal scene report.

#266/July '05. The Carbonas, MDC, Destrux, Unkind, Hiretsukan, Giant Haystacks, Ohuzaru, Teenage Harlets, Michigan scene report, San Diego scene report, Eugene, OR scene report, photos.

#267/August '05. Knugen Faller, Sleeper Cell, Motorama, Gulcher Records history, Army of Jesus, The Slicks, Thee Merry Widows, Rotten Sound, The Faction (UK), Czech scene report, New Zealand scene report.

#268/September '05. Signal Lost, Gulcher Records history part two, Teenage Bottlerocket, Mattilda (aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore), The Spectacle, Bang Sugar Bang, Chumbawamba, Reason of Insanity, Forward To Death, Flyer art, Florida Scene Report, Bay Area scene report, photos.

#269/October '05. Hammer, Desastre, Human Eye, Les Bellas, Gasmask Terror, Randy "Biscuit" Turner tribute, Stalag 17 (UK), Stepbrothers, Retching Red, Weaving the Deathbag, Gather, Chicago and SoCal scene reports.

#270/November '05. Clorox Girls European Tour, Czolgosz, Regulations, Time Flys, Taxi, No More Lies, Oil!, Paddy Costello of the Dillinger Four, Smartpils, Revenge of Mongoloid zine, Pisschrist, Scene reports: Puerto Rico, UK, Russia.

#271/December '05. Besthöven, Abductee SD, Tractor Sex Fatality, George Harrison, Deathtoll, Photos by icki, Ice & The Iced, the Ulcers, Chimps Eat Bananas, Deranged / Criminal IQ / Kick'n'Punch Records. Scene reports: Iowa, Maine, Illinois.

#272/January '06. Conga Fury, Let's Grow, Frustration, Bastardass, Icons of Filth, Burial, Hrydjuverk, Cranked Up!, Urrke T & the Midlife Crisis, Tropezio, *Baboon of Sickness* zine. Scene reports: Austin, France, Michigan, Larry Wolfley photos.

#273/February '06. Fuses, Endstand, Out Cold, Pedestrians, Acts of Sedition, BadEatingHabits, Western Addiction, Jesus Fucking Christ, Toxic Waste, Punk photo spread, St. Louis, USA & Brighton, UK scene reports.

#274/March '06. Best of 2005, Formaldehyde Junkies, Brutal Knights, Kansan Uutiset, Hatred Surge, A-Heads, Manikin, Upinatem, Hips, Boston scene report, Punk photo spread.

#275/April '06. History of ABC No Rio (Part One), Ringers, Missbrukarna, '90s garage punk scumpit, Anatomi-71, After the Bombs, Rubella Ballet, RIP Pig Champion, Ricky Adam interview and photographs, Sean McGhee, Hard Skin US tour diary.

#276/May '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part One), History of ABC No Rio (Part Two), Vitamin X Asian Pacific tour diary, Soviet Valves Suburban Death Machine, Frustrations, George Hurchalla, Scene reports: Czech Republic and Greece.

#277/June '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part Two), Imperial Leather, Boom Boom Kid, Vitamin X Asian Pacific Tour (part two), "How to Make It Big!" by the Phantom Surfers, Magrudergrind, Poland.

#278/July '06. Billy Childish, Death Token, The First Step, Ramsey Kanaan of AK Press, Headache City, Deconditioned, Under Pressure, Insuiciety, Instigators, Malaysia Scene, Bay Area Scene Pics.

#279/August '06. Mika Miko, The Fall, Cardiac Arrest Digger & the Pussycats, Massmord, Insect Warfare, The Astronauts, Canary Islands Photo Spread, Four Slicks, The Fallout, PAWNS, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, & Umeå, Sweden scenes.

#280/September '06. Hjerte Stop, Grupo Sub-1, Desperate Bicycles, Bill Daniel interview and photo spread, APF Brigade, Disconvenience, Southkore Fest photo spread, Rosenbombs, Up the Voltage, Euro photo spread, Svartenbrandt, Asheville, NC & world wide punk scene reports.

#281/October '06. Out With a Bang, Redd Kross, Derek Lyn Plastic, We March, Alan Milman, Rat Traps, Blood Robots, The Scarred, Gilbert Switzer, Japan & US photo spreads, Sweden & UK scene reports.

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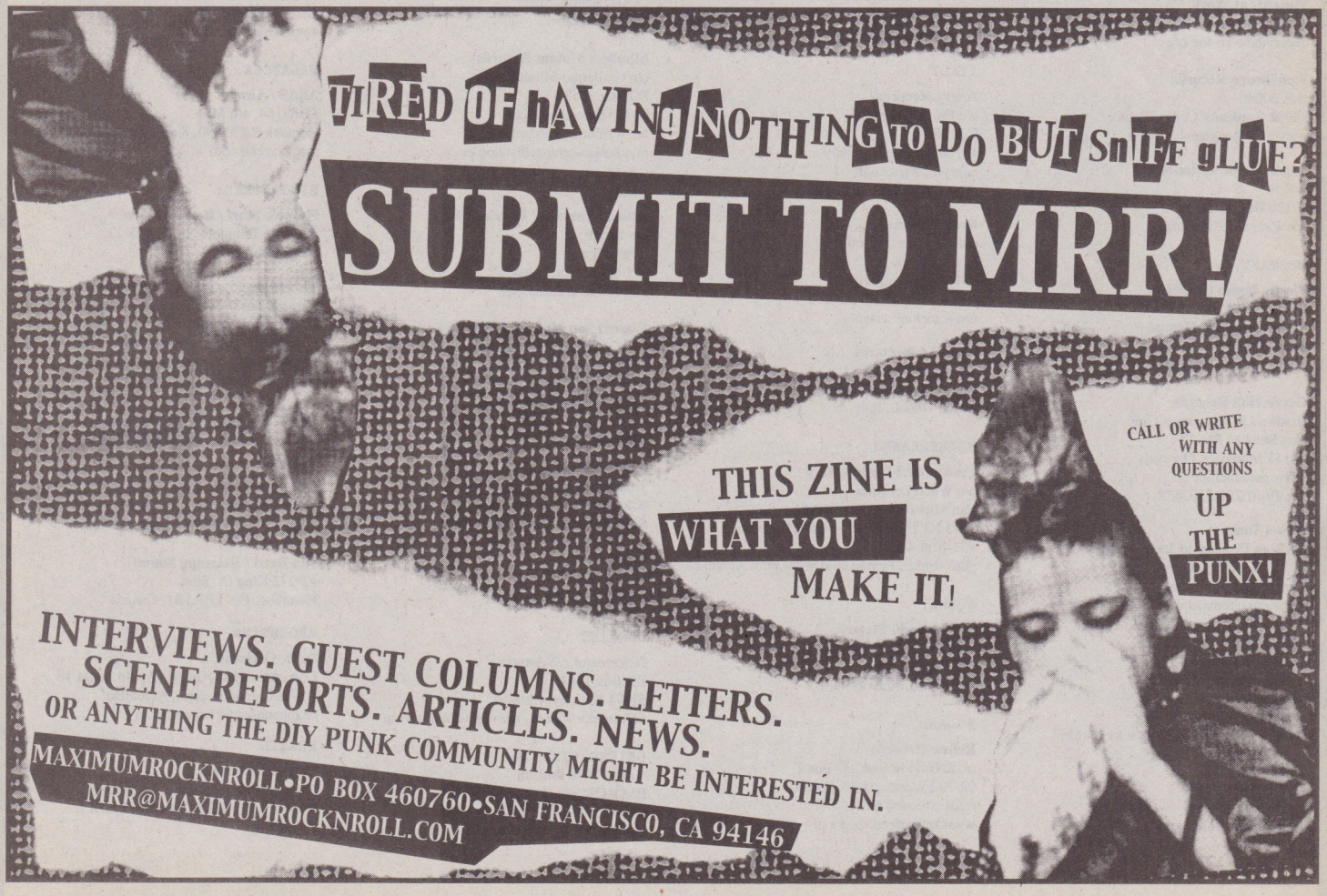

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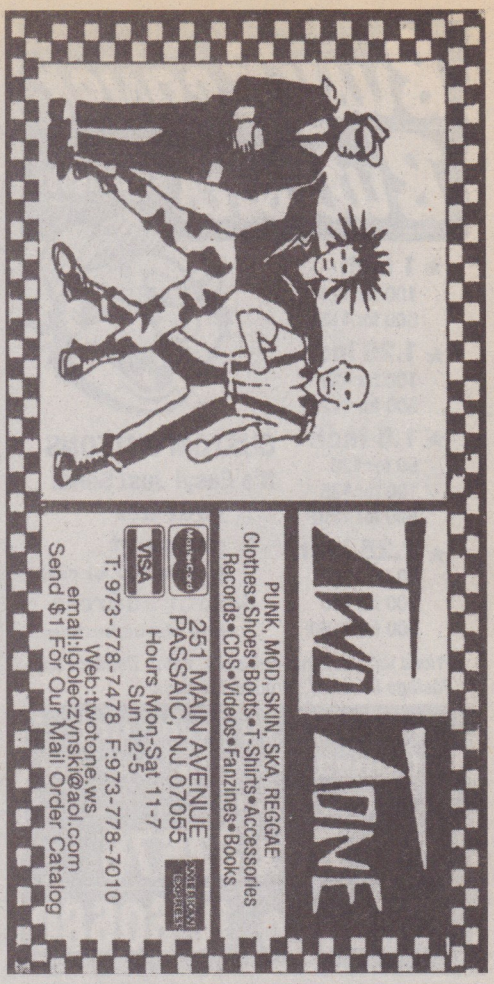

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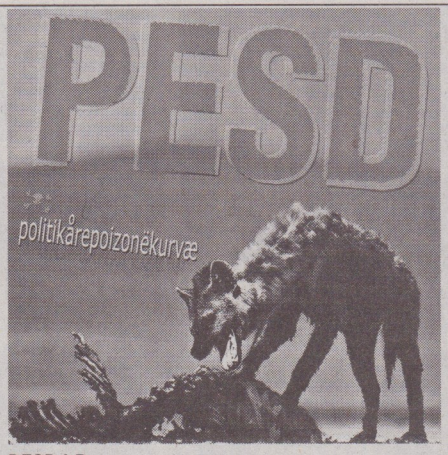

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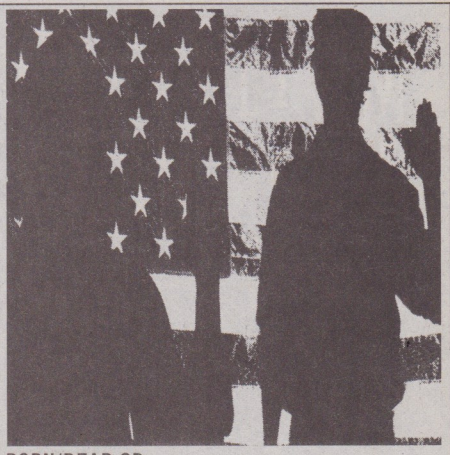

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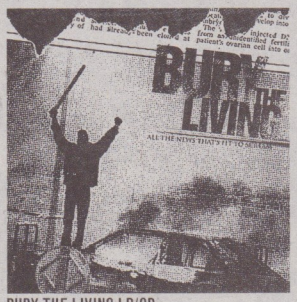

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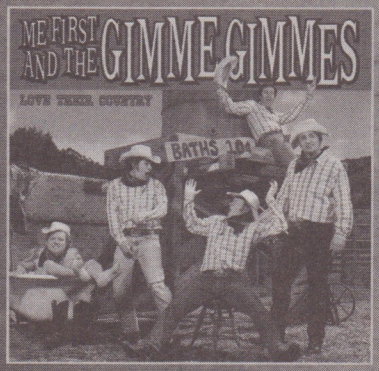

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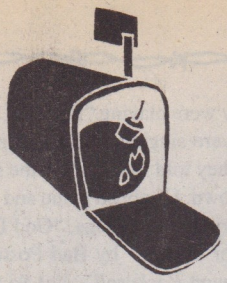


LETTERS

Send letters to MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760, or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. No response guaranteed.

Dear MRR and readers—
In Bill Florio's column in *MRR* #281 (Oct, 2006) he said that GO! was now "major label-affiliated." Bill is very sarcastic. He was making a joke. GO! is not affiliated with a major label—or *any* label. We're putting out the new 7" EP and CD ourselves. We don't even have our *own* label. It's just us—GO! NYHC.
So... trust me. We're back, but there's no way we've changed *that* much!
—Mike Bullshit

MRR–
I'm a little confused by an apparent *MRR* policy change that seems to fly directly in the face of the magazine's most basic ethics, at least if Andy Shoup's review of *Punk Pagan* in #280 is to believed. While erroneously stating that the infamous Danish cartoons of fairy tale character Mohammed offended many through their "portrayal of Muslims" (the cartoons did not depict Muslims, but their fictitious prophet who, like, totally hates people drawing him almost as much as he hates fags and women, and the demonstrations against them were state-manufactured propaganda events that came long after the cartoons), Andy quotes a couple of the mag's rather crude dismissals of ruffled Islamic feathers with the assurance that *MRR* "does not stand for this sort of bullshit at all."

Quite a shock and a disappointment to this long-time atheist and *MRR* reader, since flippant dismissals of Christian moral outrage towards our spirited irreverence are about as fundamental a punk social tenet as I can imagine, and were one to substitute some cliché "redneck" name for "Abdullah" in the cited caption, the material would be positively tame compared to countless images and words to have appeared in *MRR* over the last 25 years (*PP* editor Mike's accompanying "fucking Arabs" rhetoric is obviously moronic, absolutely deserving of criticism and discredits his entire argument, especially given that most Islamic retards are Southeast Asian, Pakistani or Persian, but that's besides the point).

Anyways, Islam—especially in its more fundamentalist forms, as held by those protesting blasphemy cartoons—is delusional dogshit for savages and cretins, like Christianity but with a more enthusiastic take on blowing up Jews, beheading people, executing queers, and generally making life as shitty as possible for our fellow human beings. This is obvious to anyone with half a brain and any sense of basic intellectual honesty uncompromised by a paranoid terror of being thought "racist" for criticizing any fascist or theocrat who happens to have a darker shade of skin. It deserves no more respect or tolerance in this culture than its ironically less rabidly anti-human Western counterparts, and real punk values are about calling this garbage what it is, regardless of who that might offend.

Of course, if *MRR* was really fulfilling its mandate, it would have reprinted the cartoons months ago, when every mainstream media outlet in the country (but *Harpers*, Sid bless 'em) backed down in the face of the threats and intimidation of theocrats, but I suppose that kind of spine is asking too much at this point; hopefully the mag hasn't entirely sacrificed clear thinking and moral integrity for the sake of false sensitivity and cowardly relativism.

Allahu akbar and God be with you,
—Simon/Ugly Pop Records

Simon—
I agree with you totally that cultural relativism is dangerous; it has more in line with bullshit "liberal" posturing than it does with accurate understandings or critiques of cultural traditions different from our own. Nonetheless, it is equally dangerous to conflate Arab identity unequivocally (and negatively) with Islam (whether it's radical form or more de-politicized expressions), which is exactly what the writer of Punk Pagan *does, and which is what Andy critiqued in his zine review. To have harsh commentary about "fucking Arabs" come moments after virulent anti-Muslim sentiment comes dangerously close to the racist and two-dimensional portrayals of Arabs, Iranians, South Asians, etc. we find in mainstream media every day. Now, I am no apologist for Islamic extremism—far from it; I find the ideology of radical Islam equally loathsome—but I think it's important to call out poorly thought out, two-bit racism at every turn.*

As a fellow atheist, I also oppose the influence of religion, both within and outside of the punk scene. Frankly, however, the current geo-political world condition, and how Islam fits into it are much more complex issues than punk's standard views on religion are probably capable of explaining. That is to say, it doesn't really matter to me whether or not it's "punk" to believe that a deeper understanding of Middle Eastern history—and with that how Islam both has and hasn't fit into that history—is necessary for a more just political worldview; it simply IS necessary. I would like to think that what punk can provoke in these treacherous times is a resistance to monolithic forms of thinking, including those that explain away our problems by calling Muslims "savages and cretins" and "retards" and leaving it at that.

Islamic extremism (like Jewish extremism in the form of messianic settlerism in the Occupied Territories, or Hindu extremism in India) is a modern, political phenomenon. It's popularity has grown in a post-colonial climate where democratic state-building was opposed by Western powers for decades. It is a trend that must be understood through the lens of history, and countered with insight and thoughtfulness rather than buying into mainstream knee-jerkism hook, line, and sinker. Violent extremism will not go away by our saying "Fuck Islam," closing our eyes, and wishing on a star. It will not go away in our current climate of racism, mistrust, or violent anti-Arab sentiment. And of course, Islamic extremism will definitely not go away with blind hatred, bombardment, or warfare. Thanks,
—Golnar

Simon—
It's difficult to respond to your semi-articulate, yet totally delusional line of reasoning. I mean, when you write things like "most Islamic retards are Southeast Asian, Pakistani or Persian," I actually wonder if you are even serious. Really, what does that even mean?

The broad strokes with which you paint the population of Islam seem to reflect a mind molded by Fox news, CNN and the White House version of the world, not someone engendered in an environment as freethinking and iconoclastic as punk.

Have you not an iota of understanding or perspective? Do you understand where Muslims have stood historically in relation to their ruling populations? Have you ever had a Muslim friend, or talked to a Muslim about what their faith and culture means to them, or how they view their people in relation to the rest of the world? I sincerely doubt that you have any real grasp of what Islam means to the average Muslim, how it sustains them and helps them to endure.

It seems to me that you feel the need to make vicious generalizations about Islam, and you believe that you have the fundamental right to disrespect this immense, incredibly diverse group of people, because of the actions of a very small number. For many, Islam has nothing to do with "blowing up Jews" or "beheading people (or) executing queers," and to suggest that it does shows a willingness to believe as you are told by the western media; to boil down a rich and complex history to a few atrocious acts committed by

zealots.

The saddest part is that one of the reasons that many Muslims are so disenchanted with the non-Muslim world is that they feel so utterly disrespected through speech, through action, and throughout history. Saying "fuck you, Abdullah," or referring to people as "Islamic fucks" is not okay, and can not be justified through a warped world view. The defense of your supposed right to assail, insult, and disrespect can only serve to create a greater divide.

—Andy Shoup

Hey Dudes–

Last time I wrote *MRR,* I was in 8th grade. Time passes, but little changes—except maybe the increasing popularity of the pro-life stance within the vegan straight edge movement. Pro-life and hardline veganism have always gone hand in hand since bands like Vegan Reich, and to a more subtle extent Earth Crisis, but now I see shit like "Total Life Defense" that uses the same far-right rhetoric that fundamentalist Christians use (images of mangled fetuses, saying that true feminists can't be pro-choice, etc). Just like some Christian hardcore bands and labels are accepted into punk/HC cuz the music is hard, I think the pro-life stance is being embraced by some "hardliners" (hate that word) because they will ingest anything vegan. Your October issue reviews a band on New Eden Records, whose Myspace page displays Total Life Defense among their top friends. I'm just wondering where *MRR* draws the line on stuff like this. I hate that bullshit because I love hardcore, straight edge, and the positive movements within each community. Take care, boyz!

—Harry

Harry–

MRR's review policy—even towards things that we stand against, like white power or far right bands—is to review the record but to call out the band on their fucked up politics. I couldn't agree with you more that anti-choice bands full of hardline jocks are pretty fucking detestable. The last thing I have the patience for in the punk scene is some moron in a terrible band telling me that I am not a true feminist 'cause I believe in a woman's right to govern her own body. But then again, these bands have never seemed to have much to do with punk rock to me. Thanks for your letter, hopefully now some MRR readers will be more aware of the politics of these labels.

—Golnar

MRR—

So here is a little to do with punk business practices. I've found that it can be damned hard to buy a shirt in stock from the more DIY companies' websites. I do prefer to buy them at shows anyhow but that's not always possible when some band from say Japandanavia or the Mid-East/West is too broke to tour. So maybe people should update their websites more often then never. Right?

Also can I get a shirt without a skull on it? Skulls are rad as hell but its kind of a huge trend. What about all the other bones? What about animal skulls?

My last problem I have with punk rock products is Nazi shit added into names and artwork. It's not like there are only a few bands using the SS and pictures of storm troopers—it's all over the freakin' place as if we like that junk, as if it's what we are about. Just thought I'd throw those ideas around.

—Joshua

Dear MRR–

In 1986, I had a real eventful stay in Huntington Beach, CA.

It all started in Riverside, CA. Some friends and I were at some girl's house, and we were slam dancing in the front yard and drinking. Eventually, my friend Kenny "Boy" and I ended up getting into a very disgusting activity—seeing who could spit on each other the most. It started out alright, but by the time it was over we were covered in spittle and lugees. After this, Kenny an I went into the girl's bathroom to clean up, and we discovered that the girl's mom had a bottle of valiums in her medicine cabinet. We each took a few, then a few more; I think in the end, I took 15. Yeah, way too much. Anyway, as we were eating more and more pills, one of Kenny's friends, Gina, showed up. I thought she was a punk rock goddess, all dressed in black with long blond bangs and short black hair making up the rest of her look. She mentioned that she was going to Hollywood to see the Angry Samoans and asked if anyone wanted to go. Kenny said I would go with her.

So, we took off to the show. But, by the time we were going over Kellogg Hill, the pills were really taking effect. I asked her if she had any speed and she said she did, so she hooked me up with some. I am not going to tell you how I did it, because I don't want you to think I was a teenage junkie, but I was. Anyway, the speed picked me up but not for long; by the time we got to Hollyweird, I was totally out of it. We were walking down the street and I kept telling Gina that we needed to get to the show. I was way fucked up. Gina said that we were already in Hollywood, but I didn't believe her until she told me to look down and I saw the Walk of Fame stars. Fuck, I am fucked up, I thought.

So anyway, we got to the show. We didn't have tickets or any money so Gina said she was going to find a way in. I didn't think she would even come back, but she did and led me into the show. I was buzzing around the crowd and I saw an ol' friend that had moved from Yucaipa to Lennox. His name was Todd. Anyway, I made my way up to the stage and some band was playing. They motioned for a girl in front of me to get on stage with them, so I asked through hand gestures if I could get on stage too. To my amazement, they let me. So anyway, they were playing "Born to Lose," and the girl and I were singing backup. Then the song was over and they told us to get off the stage, but I wouldn't get down. I grabbed a mic and started singing one of my favorite songs, "God Damn Motherfucker Son of a Bitch" by Bad Posture—they were on *Maximum Rocknroll*'s *Not So Quiet on the Western Front.*

Anyway, I finally stage-dived back in to the audience. I milled around for awhile until Gina found me and said she found a place for us to crash for the night. The guy we stayed with was some wannabe punk that went to UCLA. So, we stayed the night at his apartment. But during the night, I guess the guy wanted Gina to fuck him, and she didn't want to. I was asleep on the floor and Gina woke me up to sleep on the couch with her, so I did, but the dude got all pissed and pulled me off the couch and wanted to fight. I told him to chill in a rude fuckin' way, told him he was bitch so on. So, he kicked me out of the apartment. I was outside for awhile then Gina got him to let me back in, and he apologized. So we slept.

The next morning, Gina asked me if I took acid before—I told her fuck ya, I love it. So she stated that her friend Mickey sold it down in Huntington Beach. So Gina, the fuckhead, and I headed to the beach. We found Mickey hangin' around the pier with his skateboard. He jumped in the car and he had the freshest acid I had ever had. We all dropped a hit and cruised around, but we ended getting pulled over for something stupid. The cops were going to let us go, but as we pulled away they noticed that Gina's tires were bald so they pulled us back over. By then they ran Gina's name and she had a warrant. So they took Gina away. Fuck, I thought, Gina's fuckin' fryin' and she's going to jail—how fucked up is that? But Gina talked the cops into giving Mickey her keys.

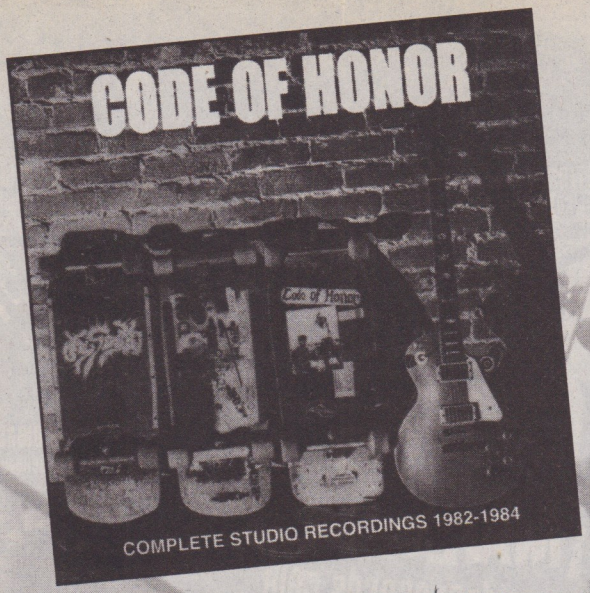
So there I was in Huntington Beach with two dudes I didn't know, frying. So anyway, the asshole started crying and whining and shit—he had never fryed, so he was getting on me and Mickey's nerves. I told Mickey what he had done the night before so Mickey and I kicked him out of the car. He was all cryin' and saying he didn't know where the fuck he was. Oh well asshole, we answered, and took off.

So until Gina got out about ten days later, me and Mickey hung out drinking and smoking weed, skating, going to the beach, and crashin' wherever we could. There was this one street that was a nonstop party. It was pretty cool down there until Mickey tried to tell me I had to earn some money and said I should sell acid for him. I knew I shouldn't even consider that, so I walked to my girlfriend's house in Newport Beach, which was like ten miles away down PCH. Then I got a ride home and that was probably my most interesting summer as a teenage punk rocker living on the streets. I had other adventures that summer but I will talk about those later.

Peace and anarchy through resistance and art.

Signed by a true friend,

—Tommy



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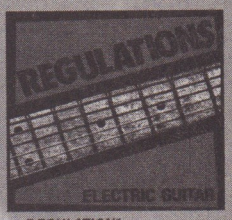

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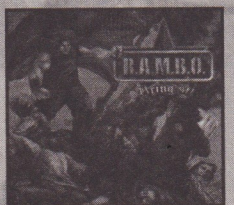

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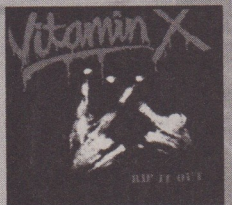

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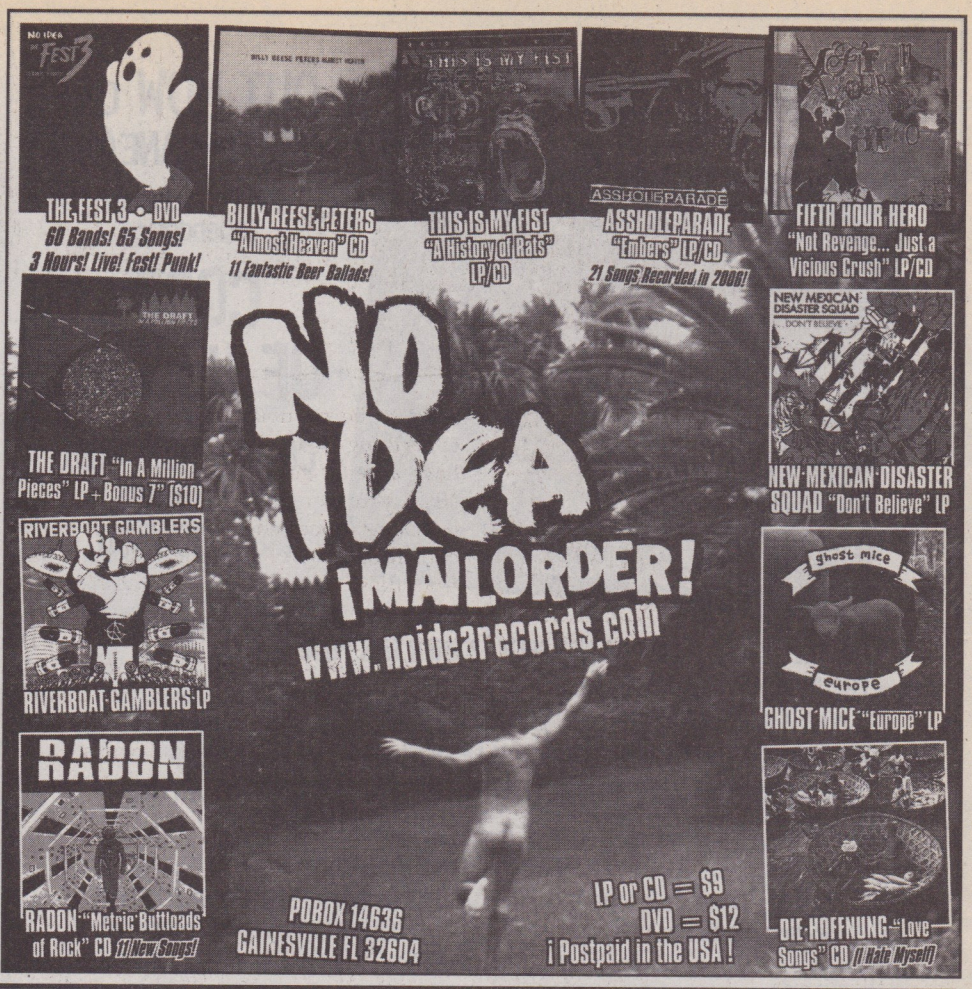

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(you know, the guy with the huge "dongo")

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COLUMNS

The last time I checked my Hollywood PO Box before closing it in preparation for our big move to Seattle, there were two letters waiting for me. Because I can think of nothing else to write about other than the anxiety surrounding our relocation and because my paper, envelopes, and stamps are all on their way to Seattle ahead of me and my couch surfing kids, this month's column will be a sort of advice column and an answer to one of them all in one.

Q: This is my first pregnancy and I'm feeling a little lost. The only punk mama I know personally hasn't been able to give me any useful help. She's a meat eater, religious, and a wal-mart shopper. I'm vegan, atheist, and I guess all the other typical crusty stereotypes—anarchist, feminist, and distrustful of Western medicine. I'm also computer-less and like I said, a little lost. I was wondering if you could recommend any books, zines, anything really.
—Sarah

A: First, find your community. You will have to go outside your usual punk community for what you want to find. Your punk friends, from the sound of your letter, don't have kids and the one you do know who does have a kid is useless! For someone like you who is distrustful of Western medicine, as long as you are experiencing a normal, healthy, low-risk pregnancy, seek prenatal care with a midwife and an out of hospital birth. Obstetricians are trained to deal with emergencies and high-risk situations and should be reserved for such purposes. For normal, natural birth, midwives have more training than obstetricians do and have better outcomes with such.

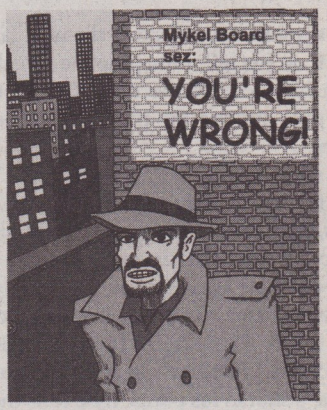
It is standard practice for midwives and freestanding birth centers to offer and/or organize childbirth education classes, breastfeeding support groups and playgroups. Start going to them now! There, although you will have to be cautious to avoid the natural-everything-by-the-book-or-bust-nazis, you have a better chance of finding others who share your core ethics in terms of medical decisions, food choices, politics, and the church of no god. And you will learn more from those seasoned mamas who have first-hand experience with pregnancy, birth, and parenting than you will from remaining isolated with only books and magazines.

With that said, however, my midwife mama friend Adriana and I highly recommend the following must-read books:
Birthing From Within by Pam England, Rob Horowitz
Ina May Gaskin's Guide to Childbirth by … duh, guess who?
Anything by Suzanne Arms
The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding by La Leche League International
Nursing Mother's Companion by Kathleen Huggins
Vegetarian Baby by Sharon K. Yntema
Pregnancy, Children and the Vegan Diet by Michael Klaper
Avoid the *What to Expect When You're Expecting* book that too many well-intentioned people read and *The Girlfriend's Guide to Pregnancy.* They're totally stupid.

These magazines:

The Mother – You can "make your UK sterling cherub or money order payable to *The Mother* and send to: The Mother Magazine, The Cottage, Glassonby, Near Penrith CA10 1DU Cumbria, UK. A yearly subscription is £16.00 ($30.40) and a sample issue is £5.00 ($9.50)."
Mothering – Has lots of good information but too much advertising for overpriced things you don't need. You can usually find it at health food stores or bookstores that carry magazines.
Hip Mama – for some reason, I can't find their contact info. Online and all my copies are on a rental moving truck right now. But you should find it at your favorite independent media outlet or info shop.
The Compleat Mother – Published quarterly (four times per year) Subscriptions are $12 a year, $20 for two years. *The Compleat* Mother / PO Box 209 / Minot, ND 58702
Avoid the mainstream ones like *Parents* and *Parenting* magazines that are in the supermarket checkout lines, pediatrician and obstetrician offices. You will vomit for reasons other than morning sickness.

So, good luck to you Sarah!!! And Punkparents, keep getting in touch. yardwideyarns@hotmail.com. No Seattle PO Box yet.



Feeling tonight like my brain is on fire. Don't touch me tonight I'm a high-tension wire.
—Dead Boys

Oh, the Protestants hate the Catholics, and the Catholics hate the Protestants, and the Hindus hate the Muslims, and everybody hates the Jews.
— Tom Lehrer

ONE: I'm tireder than Ron Jeremy after take ten. In my rental car. Back from New Jersey. Off the bridge, coming down to the West Side Highway. I pull over to the right. There's a horn. Blast. BLAST! *BLAAAAAAAAST*! Some smarmy guy in a Mercedes SUV. He thinks I cut him off. Maybe I did. Sorry.

He pulls past me. The driver's side window opens. A hairy arm comes out of the open window. At the end of the arm is a hairy hand, middle finger raised.

Something happens. I feel it rising in my body. It's a kind of pressure, beginning in my belly, a few inches north of the naval. It rises quickly. In waves. One after the other. It rises up over my chest, tingling my nipples. I feel it in my throat, a constriction, as if I were trying to force a cough. Behind it is another wave, moving up from my diaphragm. Northward, ever northward the waves progress. Through my nose, making my breathing shallow, noisy. Up to my eyes. The blood shoots through the whites of my eyes like a speed-

ball shoots through a junkie's veins. Higher and higher moves the ripple. The first wave hits my brain. Like speed shot directly into the cortex or whatever it is that controls—or releases—emotions.

Reason begins to drain. Then another wave hits the same spot. Reason is completely gone. Awareness of my surroundings, of my body, is gone. There's only the asshole that gave me the finger. He is THE ENEMY. I'm after him.

I pull the car into the next lane, cutting off the guy who was behind the evil SUV. I pull behind the bastard. There's no more than three inches between my bumper and his. I see his worried face in his rear view mirror. I grin back. A maniacal grin. His worry turns to fear.

He signals and pulls into the next lane. Me too. I'm on his tail. I imagine the sweat beading on his face. By the time I'm done, he'll never give anyone the finger again—even if he lives.

He speeds up. 55, 60, 65. I'm right on his tail. He can't shake me. He touches the brakes, figuring I'll screech to halt. Yeah right. I'm up his ass. This is rape and the victim deserves it. I again catch his eyes in his rearview mirror. He looks like he's going to cry. I laugh, loud, head thrown back, eyes bugged out. I hope he can see me. Hear me. I hope he's shat in his pants. If he calls the cops, I'll be as innocent as a lamb.

"Chasing him? Sorry, officer, I don't know what you mean. I was just minding my own business, cruising down the..."

He's changed lanes again. Fuck. I can't get over.

I speed up, and pull into the next lane, trying to get ahead of him; then cut him off. He sees what I'm up to and slows down. Way down. The car behind him gets impatient. It pulls behind me. I pull in front of the SUV to let it pass. Then I pull back into the other lane and slow down. Way down. An exit. He's off. Away. Damn!

But I feel good. My pulse slows. My breathing deepens. It's like after an orgasm. Wow! I was a monster. The Hulk. All powerful. A little guy able to strike terror into the heart of some SUV jock who will never forget me. It makes my night.

TWO: I'm at work. At school actually. It's where I go every morning to teach the New York working Japanese how to speak so people won't make fun of 'em. Before I give you the details of this adventure, I need to tell you about *apartment phlegm*.

It happens to you all the time. You're home. You set something down, a set of keys perhaps or an earring. You turn to do something and turn back. What you've set down has gone. Disappeared into some quantum wormhole. It's happened to everyone. Things just disappear into a giant sucking space hole, never to be seen again. My apartment is at the other end of that hole.

My apartment just spits up stuff. Underwear, jewelry, books. I find things that aren't mine, have never been mine. I can't imagine knowing anyone who would own such things, let alone leave them at my place. This stuff, puked from another dimension, I've christened *apartment phlegm*. I can sell a bit of it on eBay. Some is funny or interesting—but worthless. I bring it to work to offer for the enjoyment of my fellow teachers. It's my gift to the gang. Some entertainment. Something to bring a spark, a laugh, rather than the depressing daily papers.

Today I have a hunting magazine from the '60s. Lots of pictures of proud white guys standing over animal carcasses. Ads for guns, bullets, an anachronism from a time where men were men and bucks were shot. Where did it come from? Who knows?

With it, as almost poetic counterpoint, is one of my sister's old teen magazines. On the cover, a beauty queen from the 1960s sits on a rattan throne. White dress, full teenage glory of 50 years ago. It should get some laughs and maybe a few sighs for nostalgia or forbidden lust.

Now to introduce the villain of this story. I'll call him Uragi. Japanese, he works at the front desk of my school. He's part office manager, part tech expert, part hole in the condom. We have a history. A teacher I was boffing dumped me for him. Since then, he's gone through students, teachers, and random white girls like I go through bedside tissues. Slightly pudgy, without a hint of body hair, I don't get the appeal. Girls tell me he's "the most sympathetic and understanding a guy can be… without being gay." I still don't get it, but whatever it is, it works. He gets more pussy than the local animal shelter.

I tend not to get along with studs. Besides taking all the fresh meat, I'm plain jealous of the ability to play the game, win the prize, and then do it again. You know what I mean?

I still wonder what makes him tick? Why should he care about me? I'm just this shlub of a teacher. I'm no threat. Twice his age, with half his hair, what does he have to worry about? But there's hostility in there. He's out to get me.

An hour after I put my magazines in the teacher's lounge, they're gone. Disappeared. I ask if someone took them. Maybe they want to read them at home. Jerk off to the Maidenform Bra adverts. Great! I'm glad they'll be of use.

"Where are the magazines?" I ask randomly.

"Ask Uragi," comes an answer from someplace.

"Let this be a warning to you," says the Oriental himself. "I told you not to bring in that stuff. So don't do it again."

"You threw them out?" I ask. "They were here less than an hour and you threw them out?"

His silence answers.

Bad enough he has thrown out a gift from me to my fellow teachers, but now he's also forced me to stop to one of the few enjoyments I have at work. One of the few ways to relieve the tedium is to share this weirdness. Now, I'm not allowed to show that. I'm not allowed to do that. I can't share the fun with my fellow teachers. I'll read today's news or I'll read nothing. He's a censor: my most pettish of peeves.

And *I told you!* He said *I told you!* He's not my boss. He's never been my boss. What fuckin' right does he have to *tell me* anything! I don't take orders.

The ripples start. One following the other. They rise up over my chest, tingling my nipples on the way up. I feel them in my throat, a constriction, as if I were trying to force a cough. Behind them are more, moving up from my chest. Northward, ever northward the waves progress. Through my nose, bringing my breathing to something shallow, noisy. To my eyes, where I feel the blood shooting through the whites eyes like a speedball shoots through a junkie's veins. Higher and higher. The first wave hits my brain. Like a drug. Like some speed shot directly into the cortex or whatever it is that controls—or releases—emotions. My temples pound. Reason begins to drain. Then another wave hits the same spot. Awareness is gone. Except for the Oriental who threw my gift away. He is THE ENEMY. I'm after him.

I have enough control not to hit him. Barely. My mind races. The bile of pure hate takes over. I'll get him. Let him bring something in for the teachers. Pow! In the wastebasket. A gift from his hometown in Japan…cookies for everyone. BLAM! Faster than you can say, trash compactor. The revenge scenarios come faster than a thirteen-year old boy on a teacher's aid! Yeah!

Already I've embarrassed him in front of his fellow Orientals.

"Mykel?" he asked.

"What?!!" I shouted back in my best face-destroying growl.

Last weekend I missed the company picnic. A no-show for *personal reasons*. Let the *real* boss ask why. I'll tell him.

I'm obsessed. It's weeks later. I haven't had either an apology with a promise not to do it again—or better still—*true revenge*! Thoughts of getting even consume ever more of my waking time—and much of my sleeping time. I'm manic. Jerked awake at night with scenarios of getting even. Plans of revenge, future dialogs, clear as play scripts, race through my mind.

"He'll see," I think. Then I think it again.

THREE: There must be at least 150 pounds

of books in my suitcase. It's a tough green thing. A twenty-pound veteran carrier. It's been to Mongolia. It can put up with anything. There are wheels on the bottom, so as long as I don't have to lift it, I can manage most any weight.

I've just returned from picking up books at friends of friends. A pair of Polish octogenarians. Old time liberals/radicals. He's a holocaust survivor who thinks it's stupid to punish Günter Grass for a 60-year old mistake. It's hard to imagine so much persecution and not a continuing hate. But Itzak, (his *real name*!) thinks Grass is a good man. His past is past.

"Hate only means dead people," says Itzak.

I like Grass as a writer, and don't care about his past. But for me it's different, objective. My favorite writer: Celine, was a Vichy sympathizer and anti-Jew to boot. Itzak is a little closer to the problem. He's had it with hate. I haven't.

So I've got my suitcase full of Itzak's books, given to me to sell on Amazon. I'm struggling on the street, trying to flag down a cab. The taxi ride will probably cost me $15. Since I'm splitting sales with Itzak and his wife, that'll mean I'll have to sell $30 worth of books to pay for the ride. But there's no way I can get this suitcase down the subway stairs, let alone *up* the subway stairs on the other end.

A cab stops. The driver pops open the trunk latch and sits in the front seat, jabbering on his cell phone, expecting me to hoist the backbreaking bag into the trunk. Yeah right.

I slam the trunk shut and pull open the back door. It slams into the curbside car next to the cab. A chubby colored girl in the car sticks her head out.

"What the fuck are you doing?" she yells at me. "You slammed into my door. You opened the cab door right into my door."

"Sorry," I say. "I didn't realize it."

"You didn't realize it? You blind? You hit my fuckin' car."

"Sorry," I say again, dragging the bag into the back seat of the cab and curling up behind it.

"Why didn't you let me help you with the bag?" says the driver.

"It's a little late now," I growl at him. "I'm going down to Broadway and Bleecker."

"Should I take the FDR drive?" he asks.

I was a cab driver too. I know that trick. It's blocks and dollars out of the way.

"No thanks," I tell him. "Just take Second Avenue downtown."

He shrugs and starts speaking in his cellphone again. I can't recognize the language. Hindi? Hebrew? Arabic?

We're at 86th Street heading downtown. At 64th Street, the driver suddenly turns right.

"Where are you going?" I ask.

"There will be too much traffic on Second Avenue," he says. "Do you want me to take Lexington Avenue or Fifth Avenue downtown?"

"I want you to take Second Avenue," I say. "I said Second Avenue."

"It's too late for that now," says the driver.

We turn left on Fifth Avenue heading south. Then we hit traffic. Stopped. Not moving an inch.

"This is much faster than Second Avenue," I say, looking at his license.

His name is Muhammad Islam—I shit you not—Muhammad Islam.

The ripples start. One following the other. They rise up over my chest, tingling my nipples on the way up. I feel them in my throat, a constriction, as if I were trying to force a cough. Behind them are more, moving up from my chest. Northward, ever northward the waves progress. Through my nose, bringing my breathing to something shallow, noisy. To my eyes, where I feel the blood shooting through the whites like eyes like a speedball shoots through a junkie's veins. Higher and higher. The first wave hits my brain. Like a drug. Like some speed shot directly into the cortex or whatever it is that controls—or releases—emotions. My temples pound. Reason begins to drain. Then another wave hits the same spot. Awareness is gone. Except for the Arab taxi driver. He is THE ENEMY. I'm after him.

Red light. Green light. We move an inch. Red light.

"Stop!" I yell. "Stop now! I'm getting out here!"

The fare on the meter is $10.50. My hand shaking from anger, I pass a twenty and a one through the plastic protection window. "Give me a ten. Now!"

He looks back at me, reading the rage on my face. He fumbles through his money and hands me a ten. I slam the door open. In traffic. The taxi behind us honks wildly. Struggling, I pull the bag out of the cab and ignoring the cars around me, stagger with it onto the sidewalk.

Dragging the suitcase down 5th Avenue, I plot my revenge. I'll call the city. The office of taxi and limousine commission. That fucker! The law says he's got to take me where I want to go—and the way I want to go. Mohammad Islam?!!! He's probably a terrorist. Besides, he knew I was a Jew. It's written all over my face, beard-to-baldness. He can't treat me like that. It's a hate-crime. I'll show him! I hate him and his hate-crime committing cohorts.

It doesn't occur to me that I have Muslim friends and a great pal whose name is Bassam. I don't think about the holocaust survivor who warned me so few minutes before. Instead, I'm consumed by primal hate—and loving it.

FOUR: Twenty-five years ago, a great man (me!) wrote, *Hate has gotten a bad name during the last twenty years*...Things have changed since then.

People are realizing that hate just feels good. It gets the blood rushing, the nerves pumped. It's probably not healthy. High blood pressure, strokes, murder. But it is fun. It's the total abandonment of self. You can become pure id. You're relieved of all responsibility. You have no worries except the object of your hate. Hate is the name of the game. It was once shunted away, hidden, embarrassing. Now it is in the open. Running free. The world invites you to hate for the fun of it.

I credit religion for bringing hate out of the closet. What could be more obvious than the Reverend Fred Phelps? He's one of the truest Christians I know. His website: godhatesfags.com is the most Christian site on the net. It explains everything. And not only Christianity.

Look at the world: Can you imagine invading a country, slaughtering hundreds of people, just because someone in the same political party as someone in that country kidnapped a citizen? It doesn't make sense. But hate doesn't need to make sense. Those who try to analyze the Israeli invasion of Lebanon will miss the point if they don't consider *hate.*

It is the driving force of history—especially religious history. The Catholic Inquisition, Protestant Witch-burning, Jewish prisoner torture, Muslims flying planes into tall buildings, Genghis Kahn forcing Buddhism on Asia. All this and more is fueled by hate.

In the '60s, hippies tried to build a movement on love. They tried to create a society where people respected each other. They believed that down deep we all wanted and needed love. They were wrong and the "movement" barely lasted ten years.

Religion got it right. Religion knows that the way to a man's loyalty is through his hatred. Why do most religions stress abstinence? No sex. No booze. No drugs. They allow you only one outlet that feels good. You've got one place to let it out, enjoy the adrenalin. Live the life godhatesfillintheblank wants you to live. Religion will find the object. The focus. You don't have to wait for someone to give you the finger from a moving car. You don't have to work in an office where some petty staff member throws away your gifts. You don't need to take a cab with Muhammad Islam. You only have to follow the religion. Joyous hate will soon be yours.

When those pundits and TV talking heads try to analyze the world situation, you'll know better than them. When the lefties talk about oppression and the righties talk about strategic advantage, you'll know it's bullshit. Remember when Clinton told you "it's the economy stupid," you can laugh at how wrong he was.

You know it's the force of hate that drives

the world. Every synagogue, mosque, church, temple is a house of hate. And every-once-in-awhile, you'll find yourself praying at your own house of hate—even if you're not a believer.

ENDNOTES: [email subscribers (god@mykelboard.com) or website viewers (www.mykelboard.com) will get live links and a chance to email comment on the column]

For those who didn't get the reference dept: Günter Grass is a liberal German writer. He won the Nobel Prize and has worked hard in support of somewhat liberal political candidates. It was recently revealed that he was also in the SS. He says economics and politics forced a young impressionable Günter into the Secret Service. Most Jews don't buy it. Even the Poles want to take back the award they gave to the old man. As if the Poles were so pure in their WWII Jewish relations. The new Pope was a member of Hitler Youth. No one's talking about taking anything back from *him*. But he's not a liberal.

Small Victories dept: In Iowa, a federal judge ruled that the state could not fund an InnerChange prison program. The ruling said that the program was "overwhelmingly devotional in nature and intended to indoctrinate inmates into the Evangelical Christian belief system." That's one for us... 6,324,003,234 for them.

How about a MYKEL'S LAW dept: *New York Metro* newspaper says that the sister of Imette St. Guillen is pushing for Imette's Law. A bouncer at a local NYC club was charged with Imette's murder. Her sister wants a law that would "mandate the installation of security cameras at the entrance to all establishments in New York that hold liquor licenses." Can you imagine? And what happens if someone is murdered at home? In her bedroom? In the bathroom? Mandatory security cameras there too? Jeezus! If you want your freedom, you've got to take risks. That's what freedom is. Enough *security* already!

Psychologists at Lund University in Sweden presented 120 participants with pairs of photos of faces. They asked them to choose "the most appealing" of the two. Then the researches secretly exchanged the selected picture for the one not chosen. These they gave back to the subjects. More than 74 percent of the participants didn't notice the mismatch between their intention and the outcome. Not only that, they gave a reason for why they chose the face they did not, in fact, choose.

The psychologists call it "choice blindness." And though they're not sure what it means, I think it means people who participate in psychology experiments don't give a shit. The researchers, perhaps, will find a deeper meaning.

Corporations and your government dept: A couple of weeks ago, AT&T revised its privacy policies. It now says the company owns customer records and can do what it wants with them. This includes turning them over to whoever asks. The old policy said it would turn over the records only in response to "a subpoena, court order or other legal process."

At about the same time, an article in *Salon* detailed the experiences of two former AT&T employees working at a facility that has a secret, secure room where a government agency monitored internet traffic.

And what did AT&T get in return? Remember *Net Neutrality*? The idea that everyone has a right to equal access across the net? AT&T managed to get exactly what it wanted from the House of Representatives. That means NO NET NEUTRALITY. AT&T also managed to stop a bill in the Senate. And finally, it convinced the FCC that cable providers and small ISPs—especially wireless providers—should be made to reconfigure their networks such that they can wiretap their customers as easily as AT&T can. Even better, the government has budgeted up to $500 million in subsidies for the telephone companies to make the changes—but not a dime for other broadband providers.

Intellectual property dept: The Motion Picture Association of America hired a hacker to break into the networks of TorrentSpy and other file-sharing companies. The goal was to shut the companies down.

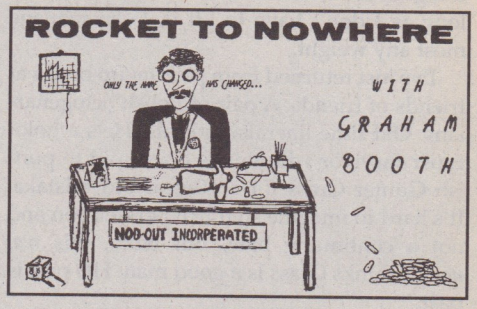
What's entertaining is that while the MPAA was trying to figure out ways to wreck file-sharing companies, at least one studio is negotiating a deal with those companies to distribute video content. While at least part of the movie industry is getting the idea, the recording industry isn't. The lawsuits will continue. But fear not.

In the true spirit of capitalism a Swedish company will insure you in case you get sued. The cost: $19 a year. Pay them and download away. They'll defend you. (More info at: http://www.techdirt.com/articles/20060629/0038249.shtml)

Mongolians have been doing it for years dept: New York Metro reports that San Francisco will begin picking up dog shit for use as a power source. The shit will be tossed into a methane dumpster and the rising gas will be used for "a gas stove, heater, turbine, or anything else powered by natural gas." If I could only run my AC on *my* natural gas. I'd save a bundle!

Police blotter dept: Franklin Paul Crow was charged in Florida with the death of his roommate Kenneth Matthews. The man was charge with fatally beating his roommate with a sledgehammer. The reason? There was no toilet paper in the house and the offending person did nothing about it. Police said Crow "confessed during questioning." I wonder how they did the good cop/bad cop routine without breaking out laughing.

"I understand, son. I've been there too. Ruined a good pair of jockey shorts, I did. Talk to me son. Get it off your... er... chest. I understand."



It's September and garage sale season is still going strong. It never ceases to amaze me what insanely eclectic music collections are lurking just around the corner in your most unassuming neighbor's house. This past weekend was no exception:

We got a late start Saturday. It was already noon, and we debated whether we should bother going at all. Without much happening until later that evening, I decided to peruse the classifieds. There was nothing to get excited over, but in my growing sense of desperation, I managed to assemble an itinerary of four sales with "records" in the listing. Thank GG for Google Maps! All of the sales were within a three mile radius, so I started with the sale ending earliest, and planned the rest of our route from there.

The first sale on our itinerary was ending at 1:00 PM. Better hurry! Their ad, like most ads, was short and didn't give much to go on—just "records" amid about fifteen other words. Plus it was almost over, so any good stuff was surely long gone, purchased by the other weekend record hounds.

It can get surprisingly cutthroat at the crack of dawn, which is even stranger when you realize that the furious competition is quite often a bunch of grumpy old men. Most of these crotchety old hacks could give a crap about the music contained in the grooves—They buy the stuff purely for resale value. Thankfully, their tolerance for the obscure borders on zero. Of course eBay is slowly turning everybody into experts.

We pulled up to a nondescript apartment complex, and there it was, or what was left of it, spread out on a blanket in the driveway. The sparsely scattered piles were far from promising, but sure enough, there were two stacks of albums leaning against a low wall along the property line, baking in direct sun. As I approached, I noticed the "Record Albums 25 cents" sign.

Before I started flipping, I suggested to the seller that he might want to get them out of the sun. He agreed, and we both made dismal attempts at lifting a stack each, precariously shuffling them ten feet over into the shade. These things were hot to the touch, literally.

With them safely in the shade, I started to dig into the first stack. I was surprised to see many of the albums were in new clear plastic sleeves, especially considering the 25-cent price tag. This guy was obviously a collector, but also apparently unaware of the value of old, clean records.

There was a lot of easy listening, with a heavy dose of HERB ALPERT AND THE TIJUANA BRASS albums. A garage sale staple indeed, but this guy went further than most with all the usual HERB ALPERT, and several more of his obscure titles I'd never seen before. Of course then, my heart skipped a beat when I hit the SUN RA LP. I scanned the cover quickly, recognizing the (Impulse) logo, as well as a "*Promotion – Not For Sale*" sticker on the bottom right. *Fate In a Pleasant Mood*... "That's some freaky stuff," my eager salesman explained.

"Hmmr, yeah," I agreed, as I lifted it to the side, noticing another SUN RA LP right behind it. This time *Astro Black*, again on (Impulse), and with the same "*Promotion – Not For Sale*" sticker. I'd become well acquainted with SUN RA early on in my collecting days, remembering both the trippy album covers AND the $40+ price tags from record store walls. Score!

As an aside, while I will probably end up selling them eventually, I've been eager to revisit SUN RA's records lately. For the uninitiated, SUN RA is one of the more compelling enigmas of modern/free jazz, and also happens to be from my hometown, er, "region," Chicago. To any novice collectors wanting to delve into jazz, I would definitely recommend seeking out releases on the (Impulse) label as a starting point. It's always a good, and usually a great bet; standard stuff of course, but both out there enough to stay interesting for long-time fanatics, and accessible enough for the most casual listener. Plus original titles from the '60s and '70s can still often be had in used bins for under $10, complete with their telltale thick gatefold covers...JOHN COLTRANE, CHARLES MINGUS, OLIVER NELSON, ALBERT AYLER, PHAROAH SANDERS...

I kept going through the stacks, though there weren't many other interesting records for me. At 25 cents a pop, I grabbed an early FERRANTE & TEICHER album. The duo, an early purveyor of "Space-Age Bachelor Pad Music," was obviously my Tiki sipping seller's area of expertise. For kicks, I pulled the vinyl out to check the condition, and the thing looked unplayed. I would later discover that the SUN RA albums, besides being White Label Promo copies, were similarly spotless. I also nabbed a Soundtrack LP for the movie *The Warriors* among other things.

Ready to leave, I scanned the blanket for something else to fill out my purchase. I was only at $1.75 after all. "Do you need any cassette tapes?" the diligent salesman quipped. I noticed a plethora of CURE and DEPECHE MODE tapes, and picked up *Boys Don't Cry* for the car. He then pointed to a plastic bag and a shoebox full of more tapes, wherein lied surprise #2. I started digging through the bag, noticing several Spanish titles like TOXODETH and TRANSMETAL. My heart stopped again when I read the words SOLUCION MORTAL on a Yellow J-card. Sure, it turned out to be a live cassette from the early '90s, but to find it at a garage sale??? With SUN RA records??? This guy had me floored.

SOLUCION MORTAL was Mexico's first hardcore band, or at least the first one to release anything that I know of. They remain a mystery to most outside of tape trading circles (including myself), since they never had any vinyl releases, only a string of nine cassette releases starting way back in 1982. You may have heard them on one of a handful of '80s hardcore compilations including the legendary ROIR tape *World Class Punk* (I found that one at a church rummage sale!), and one of the BCT tape compilations.

The tape I found at the garage sale, *En Vivo En Iguanas*, ("Live at Iguanas") is a—duh—live cassette recorded in 1991. My guess is that it's probably not the best introduction to the band, as it has tons of effects including echo on the vocals and the strange flanger effect that most live tapes of the era have. The music is a mix of hardcore and crude thrash metal, as you also might expect from the era, and as with most bands, it works in some places and doesn't work so well in others. If nothing else, it's an entertaining listen.

I would imagine their *Thousands of Dead Punks* cassette from 1985 is their best release, since all of their other releases from the '80s are live cassettes. Their *Live at Fairmount Hall* tape from 1982 is also probably a good bet. Hopefully I'll come across them someday. In the meantime, SOLUCION MORTAL is still around, playing shows, and they even recorded some new material recently. With a quick Google search, I even managed to find a —cringe—MySpace page for them. Who knew?

Back at the garage sale, it turned out my seller had purchased some Mexican tapes on a trip to Tijuana a few years back. Stunned by my interest ("You *know* these bands???"), he rifled through the bag pulling out everything with a Spanish title. In addition to the aforementioned tapes, he handed me tapes by other Mexican bands like INQUISIDOR, PACTUM, and ICONOCLASTA. Easily a couple week's worth of listening material for the morning commute, and there's nothing better to get my blood pumping than some Mexican Heavy Metal at eight in the morning! The total came to under $4.00. Not a bad haul!

All in all, this summer has been pretty great for records garage sales. I already mentioned the first DIE KREUZEN LP I found in a previous column. In addition, off the top of my head I've found LPs by: JFA, MIA (2x), TRIAL, CIRCLE JERKS (2x), FEAR, X, MODERN LOVERS, DAMAGE, CHROME, TOY DOLLS, STARJETS, SUPER HEROINES, DANZIG, PEGBOY, LIGHTNING BEAT MAN, *Clockwork Orange County* comp, *Decline Of Western Civilization* LP, and the funniest: CHRIST CHILD sealed LP out of yard sale leftovers trash. And that's only the punky stuff, not including all of the other obscure '60s/'70s rock, soul, and just plain weird stuff I've come across. I may regret encouraging it come next summer, but you never know what you're gonna find at a garage sale. And remember, it may be bad, it may be trashed, but it probably won't cost you more than a buck...Get Out There!

A few months ago I talked about the manner in which fossil fuel depletion and rising energy prices might affect the punk scene and band touring. I'd like to step back a little bit for a few columns and talk about some solutions to these problems in the bigger picture. I've spent most of my time the last year or so reading about these issues and have made many concrete changes in my own lifestyle. I'm also working on taking my remodeling business (what I do for a day job when I'm not selling punk records) into a more sustainable direction with a focus on improving homes to become more energy efficient and using renewable and recycled materials.

This month I'd like to talk about the process of re-localization. In the past few decades the global economy has revolutionized the way goods and services are delivered to ordinary people. Thousands of every day items once made and consumed locally, are now made on the other side of the planet. While some argue that this has helped to increase living standards and provide jobs for people in impoverished countries, others argue that it has merely served to enrich a small elite while actually driving down wages of ordinary workers. Furthermore, globalization has done much to wreck local economies and destroy the environment. This is especially true for industries that use huge amounts of natural resources and create pollution—much of their production has been shifted overseas where there is little

environmental protection or labor standards to speak of. My approach to the issue, however, comes primarily from an energy perspective. It takes great amounts of energy (in the form of fossil fuels) to produce and transport food and goods around the world. As energy prices rise, the prices of these goods will also rise. And without local alternatives, they will be priced out of reach of normal people. Furthermore, the very consumption of these resources is a major factor in global warming.

Another interesting perspective on this is the growth of corporate chains for most retail business over the past few decades. In the past, many goods and services were provided by local companies. Now, there are now corporate franchises or chains for every possible activity, from haircuts, to sporting goods, to fast food. These tend to provide a low-quality, low-price service that is uniform from coast to coast. As is often noted, this tends to drive many local firms out of business. The corollary to this is that huge amounts of money that would have stayed in the community and been spent on other local goods and services is sucked out of the community and never seen again. Once again, a small elite reaps the benefits of this transfer of wealth while ordinary people continue to pay to gut their own local economy.

I have always tried to avoid the corporate chains, probably more for aesthetic reasons than anything else. I've never been to local tourist attraction "The Mall of America," reported to be the world's largest shopping mall, largely because there's nothing sold there that I need. But lately I've put a lot of thought into re-localization and trying to support local businesses and the local economy. Like a lot of people, I've often made my buying decisions based on price. But the older I get, the more I realize two old adages ring true: "Cheapest isn't always best" and "You get what you pay for." That is to say, much of what's available at the lowest price is also of the lowest quality and you'll have to replace it much sooner than a product of quality. A great example is footwear. I'm a big fan of locally made Red Wing work boots. These are hard-wearing boots that are comfortable and well made. A good pair of $100 work boots will outlast three pairs of $40 Chinese-made "pay-less" work boots. So which is the cheapest in the long run?

I started to spend a lot more time looking around my community and assessing how my money is spent and who it goes too. As I noted before in this column, you "vote" with your money for what kind of system you want to live and what kind of people you support. Money spent at WalMart only goes to strengthen the corporate elite and the Chinese communist system, while money spent at a local co-op or farmers market goes to local workers and trades people. The ripple effect of this is that the local businesses also purchase many of their services locally, using a local accountant, a local electrician, etc. and also tend of have a vested interest in owning and maintaining homes and places of business in the community. I am lucky to live an area where many local small businesses are still intact. I can buy food at a farmers market, and local food co-ops. There is a local pet and garden store for dog food, a local shoe store, some good local taco shacks and diners, a gas station not too far away that sells bio-diesel for my truck, a local bakery for fresh bread, and so on. I also live a few blocks from a light rail transit system and in an area with well-planned bike trails so I can do most of my local transportation by bike or rail. I live in a neighborhood that was developed in the 1910-'20s, a classic American "streetcar suburb." In my opinion, these are the best neighborhoods in America—the density is high but not congested, and the network of local businesses is still for the most part intact. In many cases, re-localization isn't a radical departure from past patterns of life, but a return to how many communities operated in the era before globalization. In older neighborhoods, the infrastructure is still there for many local small businesses (in fact, the building I live in was once the local grocer and meat market). As prices for goods produced by the offshore manufacture system rise, this infrastructure can be put back to use for local needs.

Re-localization makes the most sense in the area of food production. Consuming food that is produced locally means you are supporting local agriculture and your food travels the shortest distance from the farm to your plate. This means less energy is expended in transportation, refrigeration, and packaging. I've been trying to move as far from packaged "value added" foods as possible and eat as much whole grains and locally grown produce as possible. In most cases, this sort of diet is much cheaper and healthier than eating typical processed foods from a supermarket. It also cuts down dramatically on packaging, as most whole foods are consumed raw or bulk. I hardly have to take any trash and recycling out anymore. The neighborhood I live in actually spent several years organizing a local farmers market to encourage people to buy locally produced foodstuff. The market is in the parking lot of the light rail station and provides fresher, higher quality food at prices lower than in a supermarket a few blocks away.

The opposite of this environment is the newer communities far out in the suburbs where the only businesses are corporate chains and nothing is accessible by any means other than driving. The aesthetic in these communities is shockingly banal, from the acres of surfaced parking to the monotonous cookie cutter housing and strip malls built "on spec." As energy prices continue to rise, the cost of survival in these communities will rise much faster than it does in the older urban core. Heating the McMansions and driving the long commutes will start to bite into the shrinking wages of the suburban middle class. Many have long argued that the promise of suburbanization was empty and this lifestyle was an aberration from thousands of years of human settlement in either cities or the countryside, but economics might have the final say and doom this pattern of settlement by sheer cost alone.

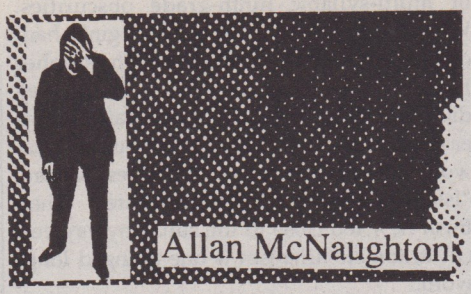
The other dimension of re-localization is being able to get the goods you need close at hand. As mentioned above, I live in an area with bike paths and lanes, and a light rail transit system. A short bike ride can get most of the goods I need, and if I do need to drive, the drive is at least short. I made a conscious decision some time ago to substitute bike for auto transit for as many trips as possible. Unfortunately since my business involves hauling goods, I still spend a lot of time behind the wheel of my truck. I bought a bike trailer and found an old bike in a scrap metal pile that I've hooked up to it. Most of the Havoc Records mailorder actually goes to the post office by bike and I can also bike to pick up groceries and dog food. The convenience and speed of driving often wins out in these equations, but in the future fuel might be so expensive that driving is reserved for only the most important trips.

Another area to explore is each community producing more of what it needs locally. We started a small garden in our backyard this summer, with plans to expand it next year. Community gardens are quite common in Minneapolis and much vacant and underutilized land exists in most major cities that could be dedicated to producing foodstuffs locally. This may sound quaint or even farfetched, but if you consider that our current system of food production relies very heavily on natural-gas-derived fertilizers and truck transport, we could see a future in which food prices skyrocket from their historically cheap levels. There is actually some precedent for turning over lots of urban land to local food production in the Victory Gardens of the Second World War era—a concept that we may need to revisit in the not so distant future.

As you may glean from some of my points above, *where* you chose to live is of great importance to being able to live a more sustainable and locally based lifestyle. The further out into the suburbs you choose to live, the further you are from the ideals of a local economy. The inner city and the intact small town probably offer the most poten-

tial. And it's not a mistake that in the era before the automobile and globalization these were the only modes of sustainable human settlement. We can extrapolate this a bit and look at how different cities and areas of the country are posited in terms of their sustainability. In general, the newer the city/community, the least likely it would be able to survive in an era of rising energy costs and strained global economies. The best example would probably be a place like Las Vegas. This city is, of course, in a desert, it produces little of what it needs to survive, and depends almost entirely on visitors by car and plane for its economy. What happens to a place like this in an era of $200-a-barrel oil? In contrast, densely populated areas with efficient mass transit will be less affected by rising energy prices, especially if they are situated near productive agricultural areas and water- (as opposed to highway) based transit (think of Chicago, Seattle, and of course Minneapolis). There is an interesting website called sustainlane.com that evaluates different cities by their level of sustainability. Not surprisingly Portland, Seattle, and Chicago are at the top and places like Dallas, Oklahoma City, and Phoenix are at the bottom. If I were thinking of starting a business or a career or buying a home I would seriously consider these sort of rankings before I made my choices. In the future, the local economies in those more sustainable communities are going to be less affected by changes in the global economy, while those closer to the bottom of the list are going to see their local economies placed under greater stress and the cost of living rise for their residents.

As energy prices rise, American cities are by necessity going to need to become more like European and Japanese cities. In an era of $8- or $10-a-gallon gas, how many people will still drive 30 miles each way to work? Here in Minneapolis there is already a huge amount of new high-density development around the new light rail stations with much more planned. This might seem shocking to Europeans, but Minneapolis hasn't had an effective transit system since the streetcars were replaced with busses in the early 1950s. Furthermore, great strides are going to have to be made in increasing the energy efficiency of homes and businesses in terms of heat and electricity; again there is much the US can learn from Europe and Japan on this front. I'll talk more about green building and more efficient buildings in a future column. But for the purposes of today's discussion, I think people need to make thoughtful and informed decisions about what kind of community they chose to live in, how their lifestyle patterns integrate into that community, and where the things they need to survive come from. I don't think we can take our current system for granted for much longer.



Where are the ideas?

I was indulging in my latest hobby, browsing the YouTube website, when I came across a trailer for *Made in Sheffield—The Birth of Electronic Pop*. This film deals with the influential music scene that blossomed in the northern English steel town immediately following the explosion of punk rock. For the most part, the punks of Sheffield took the influences of punk and applied them in unorthodox ways, forming synth-pop bands like The Human League and Heaven 17 or avant-garde groups like Cabaret Voltaire and DAF. It's a side of post-punk that I'd never paid too much attention to—I hated those new wave bands when they appeared on Top Of The Pops. If you'd told me they had come out of the punk scene I'd never have believed it. Later on I was vaguely aware that those bands had put out their earliest records on punk labels, but it was only when I read Simon Reynolds' book *Rip It Up and Start Again—Postpunk 1978-1984* that I became fully aware of those bands and their members' connection to punk. Of course, like a lot of punks, post-punks, and new-wavers, they saw the opening of the floodgates of independently released music as simply a new way to get on the first rung of the ladder of success. The Sheffield contingent also believed, with their synths, drum machines, and lack of guitars, that they were destroying rock 'n' roll. For those who actually *liked* rock 'n' roll, this didn't go over very well.

At any rate, the trailer excited me enough to send off for the documentary. It came out last year and was produced and directed by Eve Wood, a Dutch immigrant to Sheffield. She uses archive footage along with current interviews with scene participants and band members as well as journalists and notably, with veteran BBC broadcaster John Peel (RIP), who gave most of the bands their first exposure.

As in provincial towns the length and breadth of the UK, Sheffield saw its share of bands starting up after the infamous Sex Pistols vs. Bill Grundy incident on television. It seems that because of some unexplained experimental, artsy strain that was running through the outsider kids of the town, though, they expressed themselves in different ways, rather than just aping what the Pistols, Damned, Clash, and so forth were doing. One could argue that the musical fruits of this labor might leave something to be desired when compared with, say, what was happening in Manchester or Leeds at the same time, but questions of musical taste aside, watching this film I was struck by the way the bands all seemed to be striving to do something new. They were competing with each other to be the first to come up with a certain sound, to play something that no one had ever heard before. Now, I should add the caveat that I don't necessarily enjoy all the sounds they *did* come up with, but I can't help being impressed by the commitment to innovation and creativity.

It makes me wonder what happened to that creativity within the punk scene. I'm not saying that everyone should be trying to come up with sounds that nobody's ever heard. I like songs, and rhythm, and hooks, and structure. I've listened to noise music and frankly I can do without it. But it seems like these days, people are happy to just pick an already-popular or overdone style, ape it, and sit back and watch the records fly off the shelves. I'm not talking about mainstream pop music here. I mean in just about every genre of punk, from pop punk to power violence, the focus seems to be on how authentically a band can recreate a style from yesteryear, rather than add something new to that style. Again, I'm not saying that people should give up on punk or hardcore or whatever and devote themselves to inventing some kind of space music from the future. I'd just like to see bands express themselves through their music a little more, lend their own voices and creativity to the massive collective output of the punk scene month after month, rather than trying to make their records look and sound as if they came out in 1982.

I can't tell you how many times I've had a conversation with someone who was getting a new band going. "What kind of stuff are you playing?"—"Just generic early '80s thrash." Fair enough, but why? Why would you sell yourself short? It's the generic part that particularly bothers me. I mean, you can only play the music you want to play—if it's early '80s thrash that makes the hairs on the back of your neck stand up, then go for it. But don't be generic about it. It seems like a lot of people are starting bands not out of a compulsion to create something, but because it's so easy to put together a set, shit out a poorly-recorded 7" with a xerox sleeve, and go on tour all summer with your friends. It might be fun, but it contributes to the glut of crappy punk records coming out every month, and makes for some packed and boring bills at gigs.

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One band that I think is an example of someone doing it right is Fucked Up. They take the basic ingredients that go into making a good hardcore or punk song, and somehow manage to come up with something that sounds totally classic yet amazingly current at the same time. You know how when people try and "challenge the boundaries of punk rock" they end up watering it down, or becoming too (nu-)metal? Fucked Up have managed to expand upon punk and hardcore without losing any of the bite, anger, or power. Listening to them, you get the feeling that they have really thought about their songs, actually sat down together and talked about ideas. Why is that refreshing? Why isn't that the norm?

In case you haven't figured it out yet I can't say enough good things about this band. I just wish I could make it to Toronto for their three-day record release extravaganza. If anyone who goes wants to pick up the limited records for me, it would certainly be appreciated!

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For more information on the *Made in Sheffield* DVD, you can go to www.sheffieldvision.com. Generic thrash records and copies of *Looking for Gold* (1 or 2) can be sent to me at PO Box 22971, Oakland, CA 94609. I can be contacted electronically at allan@dropout.cc. As previously threatened, I have at last started to archive my old columns and some other writing at www.dropout.cc.

Poor Bush. You know the economy is lousy when Karl Rove orders him to talk up Iraq. Iraq — car bomb-civil war-assassination-roadside bomb-more dead Marines-mosque explosion Iraq — is his *good* news. Then, when he goes to unveil his newest talking point in the war of words to distract us from our Great Disappearing Paychecks, he mucks up the sound byte. Speaking to the American Legion on August 31, he reminded us that any idiot can gain — and has gained — admission to Yale.

"As veterans," he warned, "you have seen this kind of enemy before. They're successors to fascists, to Nazis, to communists and other totalitarians of the 20th century, and history shows what the outcome will be. This war will be difficult, this war will be long, and this war will end in the defeat of the to...to...toma...tomatolitarians."

Again, louder: Poor Bush! Five years of regurgitating five-cent words like "cave" and "evil" left him unprepared for the challenge of multi-syllabic ninth-grade obscurities. When the 60-year-old mental virgin's handlers rehashed ex-thinker Christopher Hitchens' "clash of ideologies" shtick, they did everything they could to make things easy for him. Hitch's neoconservative buzzword "Islamofascism" (six syllables) became "Islamic fascism" (three plus three). Then Bush flew too close to the sun. Anyway you cut it, tomatotarianism is one (danged long) word.

Chris Mooney's book *The Republican War on Science* details Bush's jihad against rationality. Censoring the findings of its own EPA and denying the consensus of the world's scientists, the Bush Administration still denies global warming. It made the FDA say that mercury may not be poisonous. It even forced the National Cancer Institute to claim that abortion causes breast cancer. Do they believe this nonsense or is this razzle-dazzle BS merely cover to protect the GOP's corporate sponsors? No one knows.

What we do know is that the Bushies have also declared war on history.

"On one side," Bush said, "are those who believe in the values of freedom and moderation, the right of all people to speak and worship and live in liberty. And on the other side are those driven by the values of tyranny and extremism, the right of a self-appointed few to impose their fanatical views on all the rest." Given the recent history of the man delivering the speech — stealing elections, torture, concentration camps, bombing civilians for fun; ordering the CIA to overthrow the democratically elected presidents of Haiti, Kyrgyzstan, and Venezuela; spying on our phone calls and medical records — well, he's obviously pro-tyranny. Liberty isn't exactly his best friend. And yet, he continues, it's the Islamotomatotarians who are about to get it in the kisser.

One of the curiouser traits of Fool and the Gang is their habit of lying about bad historical figures. Saddam Hussein, for example, killed about 100,000 people and started wars against Iran and Kuwait. The Bushies say he killed 400,000 and was seconds from taking over the world. Isn't 100,000 and two wars bad enough? Why not leave it at that?

The Bushies' newfound/reheated Islamofascist trope follows the same pattern. Politicized Islamic fundamentalists dream of installing Taliban-style governments and of enforcing a rigid Saudi/Wahhabiist-style version of Sharia (religious) law throughout the Muslim world. They want to force everyone to follow Islamic strictures, censor and/or eliminate news media, and deny women the rights enjoyed by men. That's the truth, and it isn't pretty. (It's also worth noting that, when the Saudis began lobbing off the heads of adulterers in the 80's, liberals screamed while Republicans funneled them high-tech American weaponry.)

The truth, scary as it is, is never enough for Bush. So he abuses his bully pulpit, mangling history to a nation infamous for its ignorance of the lessons of the past. "Islamofascism is nothing but an empty propaganda term," writes conservative columnist Joseph Sobran. "And wartime propaganda is usually, if not always, crafted to produce hysteria, the destruction of any sense of proportion. Such words, undefined and unmeasured, are used by people more interested in making us lose our heads than in keeping their own."

Despite Bush's latest attempts to conflate them, radical Islam has nothing in common with communism or fascism (which, moreover, have little have in common with each other). Totalitarianism is an ideological tool deployed by oppressive nation-states; they monitor and regulate every detail of their citizens' everyday lives. Citizens of radical Muslim societies like Taliban-era Afghanistan and present-day Saudi Arabia enjoy privacy and autonomy in their homes; state oppression manifests itself externally, in the streets.

Fascists use state control for the benefit of business, communists seize businesses for the benefit of the state, and Islamists have little interest in controlling economic activity as long as it doesn't violate Sharia. (Liquor stores, for example, are banned.)

"Islamic terrorist attacks," Bush addressed the National Endowment for Democracy in October 2005, "serve a clear and focused ideology, a set of beliefs and goals that are evil, but not insane. Some call this evil Islamic radicalism; others, militant Jihadism; still others, Islamo-fascism. Whatever it's called, this ideology is very different from the religion of Islam. This form of radicalism exploits Islam to serve a violent, political vision: the establishment, by terrorism and subversion and insurgency, of a totalitarian empire that denies all political and religious freedom."

Along with his comparison of Islamists to Nazis and communists, Bush's "totalitarian empire" argument implies, as the catchphrase goes, that we'll have to defeat them Over There or end our lives fighting desperate house-to-house battles against turbaned hordes in the streets of Nashville. There isn't the tiniest smidgen of truth to this — not even the most extreme Islamists have expressed a desire to invade or subjugate the United States or any other historically non-Muslim country — but Bush isn't out to spread the truth.

At this point, Bush's ambitions are less lofty ones:

First, with the House of Representatives seemingly destined to go Democratic this November, he'd like to save the Senate for the party of war and rich Protestant while males.

Second, he wants to learn to say tomatotarian.

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New Book! Silk Road To Ruin: Is Central Asia The New Middle East? (NBM Publishing, 304 pp., price $22.95), is out now. You can get the book at any bookstore or comics shop, or on the Internet, or order a signed copy by mailing $30 to the above address (include your mailing address and how you'd like it signed). The book includes 100 pages of graphic novella accounts of my trips to the Stans, photos and maps of the region, and in-depth essays explaining everything from oil pipeline politics to buzkashi, the craziest and most dangerous sport currently played by the human race.

We hear bad things every once in a while about things that happen in our punk community. People are ripped off ordering records; bands or kids who stay at your house steal stuff; people vandalize show spaces or generally show disregard for those who supply a space for things to happen. We have heard horror stories of rapes and stabbings lately. And now we've got punks with guns. It shouldn't be surprising that things only increase with severity and fucked-upness, but nonetheless I still find myself surprised that there are those associated with our community who are carrying guns around — and not just using them to pose on the backs of records, but for holding up liquor stores right next to a space that has been hosting punk and hardcore shows for years now.

I'm sure by now there have been rumors and online postings, and perhaps even official statements in this issue — I don't know. I was there, but I haven't followed any of the post-event talk. I'm talking this year's Pointless Fest in Philly, which was shut down on the second day in the middle of a full-scale Philadelphia police invasion. As I understand it, on Thursday a gathering of travelers was already collecting around the church, getting drunk, getting into fights, and generally causing a ruckus while the church still had its day-care happening. At some point that afternoon, someone, or some group of these folks, went to the closest liquor store and held them up. The whole weekend's events were almost shut down before they even started, but somehow it was agreed that a certain amount of security would be hired for the duration of the event and the show would go on. And Thursday's night show did go on, with few problems that I'm aware of. In fact, it was a great show. Denmark's No Hope For the Kids played; one of my Philly local favorites Fighting Dogs were amazing; and my favorite — Hellshock — shredded the house. We got there late, so we missed Witchhunt and Carpenter Ant. There was a post-show gathering in a city park where Erik Peterson played an acoustic set and Lynched from Ireland did the same. There was some rowdiness, but surprisingly, no problems. And I say surprisingly only because you'd expect that a gathering of a hundred or more punks in a city park close to a prominent university campus would attract some attention, if the drinking and drunks didn't.

Friday was a different story. It could easily be said that the entire police force of Philadelphia was on standby just waiting for the call to invade the corner of Chestnut and 19th streets. There was the usual hanging out on the corner, and down the side street, and many people who were there just to hang out. It's a hard one to call straight off, since an event like this is as much about hanging out, for most, as it is for seeing bands. There are always some people who get caught up in conversations outside and never make it downstairs. There are those who pick and choose the bands they'll see while they swill a beer around the corner in the bushes somewhere, or down the street at the bar. There are people who stop by just to say "hi" to friends, and there are people who travel from afar and just hang out or camp out outside and never attend the actual shows.

Sometimes deciphering all this is hard. It's easy to point fingers and make judgments and say that it's the crusties, or the travelers; this group or that group. But it goes without saying that there are some bad eggs that show up to raise hell, and have no appreciation for the neighborhood, the people who set up the show, the event as a whole, or their fellow punks around them. Because security was required, and because it was also their job to try to keep the hanging out on the corner to a minimum, it's not really that surprising that there was shit talking and people with attitudes, and trouble a-brewing.

Several bands had played before things escalated. Violation, Pissed Jeans, and Government Warning got through their sets. The World Inferno Friendship Society was transforming the basement as I went outside for some air. I just wanted to sit for a minute, and it was then that we noticed the security guys running around, talking to police sitting in their cars. At first I didn't think much of it, but you could feel the tension in the air. And it escalated. Next thing I know, one of the guys from the door is running down the sidewalk saying, "If you don't have a wristband, you're getting locked up." There was an attempt to get people to congregate on the corner, which is fairly normal. We headed inside to the "porch" just to get out of the way. Next thing we know, the police are swarming in, literally running down the street with their batons out. We stood by from the window watching the police swarm in, and then watching as kids — with wristbands, I might add — were pushed and shoved down the street in the opposite direction. A few people stopped in confusion, or tripped, and they were pushed and shoved even harder. I watched poor Tony Pointless walk by in this shuffle with the saddest expression on his face that I have ever seen. Police helicopters were swarming the skies, and we stayed safely inside for the time being, to wait it out and see what would happen.

Many stories circulated about police brutality, about innocent girls getting shoved to the ground, etc., etc. There were also counter-stories about how it was all sparked by someone with a knife held on a security guard, or a concealed knife they wouldn't show, and also of a girl who tried to sic her dog on a police officer. I know that there are always multiple sides to all situations. I know there were a lot of disrespectful jerks hanging out on the corner that night that were just waiting for a reason to fight. I know that when the police come rushing in they are not looking to help innocent bystanders, and that a mob mentality against the police and the police mentality against a mob is always a bad scene. Things happen fast; no one knows what caused or started it all; punks don't react well to police coming after them. In the end, all that really matters is that everyone was sent away quickly, and the show was shut down for the night, and the event was canceled for the rest of the weekend. And from where I sit, it all started with some supposed punks with guns, which is fucked up.

I felt bad for everyone. I felt bad for Greg and Tony, who watched their birthday weekend turn into a nightmare. Poor Tony, who moved away from Philly several months back and was returning home for his big 3-0 weekend — also a guy who doesn't drink, watching as his fest turns to shit largely thanks to a bunch of drunks. It goes without saying (or perhaps it doesn't) that they spend a ton of money getting bands to come and play, so they are facing the debt they would be in as a result of the shows not happening; facing the show space — that has held some great shows over recent years, in a city that is severely lacking for decent fair all-ages shows — be put very much in danger of continuing. (As of this writing, the space is continuing to hold shows; see R5productions.com for upcoming

shows). In other words, they were watching their world turn to shit, while they were supposed to be celebrating their birthdays with their friends. Ugh.

The good news was that on Friday night there was an after-show scheduled down the street at a bar, and Severed Head of State, who were the last band scheduled to play that night at the fest, were put on first at the bar. It was quite a difference: the bar was tiny and incredibly overfull, no one under 21 was allowed in, and since it was a small space only so many people made it inside. I didn't even think it would happen, being so close to the "police state." But the show went on, and I made it in, and Severed Head were awesome, and it was a good way to cap off a shitty night. Aghast followed up, to a much smaller audience, which was much more comfortable for those who stayed, and Nightfall, one of the latest incarnations from Philly, finished off the night.

With no Saturday show, a gathering was called in Clarke Park, where people lazed around throughout the day. A nighttime after-show had been scheduled at a bar down the street, and that show was to go on, with a line-up change to get most of the out-of-town or headlining bands to play. Again, many people were not allowed to come in, and I'm sure that there were a lot of disappointed kids in Philly that weekend. But the show went on, and it was really fucking awesome. Kylesa opened up, and when a show starts off like that with one of my absolute favorites, it's all a win-win night. Dismal, No Hope for the Kids, Severed Head of State, World Burns to Death, and the Philly All-stars cover band (a personal birthday request by Greg and Tony) all rocked the house, and the show was awesome all around. I ended up kinda running out of there at the end of the night as I looked around at friends from New York, Texas, Rhode Island, Oregon, and Georgia knew that I wasn't likely to see them again anytime soon. I couldn't bear the thought of trying to say goodbye to anyone, so I just left.

But as I did, Derek said, "Hellshock is playing tomorrow at 12:30!" I stopped in my tracks.

"12:30, as in noon?" I asked, knowing that they had flights out of town at 3 pm. I got the address of the house, someone else told me 1:00 pm, and said "I'll be there." Excited as hell, 'cause that was just the icing my cake needed.

At 12:30 I woke to Erik telling me that my phone kept ringing. Groggily I said, "What time is it?" He tells me 12:30, and I screamed "Hellshock!" jumped out of bed, and went about a mad-dash frenzy of getting myself together. I ran downstairs and woke up a whole room full of hung-over friends, saying, "Hellshock, Now!" How we managed to get ourselves together, packed up, and out the front door within 15 minutes is still kind of a mystery. Especially for me, who is notoriously slow at waking. But it's amazing what the power of Hellshock can do. We grabbed coffee at a quick stop and make it to the row house, walking straight to the basement just as Hellshock were strumming the first tuning notes. Within five minutes they were playing in a tiny basement with shoddy electrical wiring. They held nothing back and absolutely rocked my world.

"Hellshock for breakfast," I kept saying. And with that as the ultimately topping on a crazy and kinda fucked-up weekend, Erik and I said to each other, essentially, "It doesn't get any better than that. Let's go home." And so we did.

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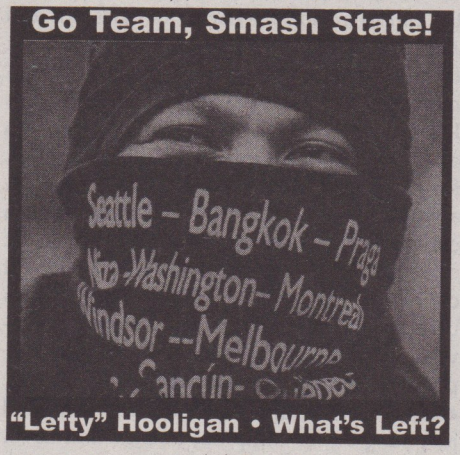
The latest issue of S&L is #88. It's available for a 63¢ stamp in the US, $1 to Canada/Mexico, $2 worldwide.



Even the good news is bad.

Israel was unable to achieve its objective of crushing Hezbollah after thirty-four days of military operations in Lebanon. The vaunted Israeli military failed to deliver a knockout blow, and because Hezbollah was still standing when the UN ceasefire went into effect on August 14, it could justifiably claim victory on points. Zionist imperialism suffered a defeat (good) at the hands of fanatical Shia Islamists (bad).

An historical parallel might help to illuminate this. It was a good thing that the US military suffered defeat in Vietnam. Unfortunately, the victors were Stalinists. American imperialism got a bloody nose in the Vietnam War from a faux Communist regime that enslaved rather than liberated the Vietnamese people. To bring matters up to date, it's damn good that America is going down in Iraq. Too fucking bad that those who are winning practice a fundamentalist form of Islam that makes Stalinism look positively cheery.

The Left considered the Vietnamese experience an example of how "the people, united, will never be defeated." Jihadis cite Hezbollah's fight with Israel, and the Iraqi resistance to American occupation, as proof of the power of their faith in Allah. That's utter bullshit, of course. Had the US military been given free reign in Vietnam, it could have turned the entire country into a parking lot, albeit a radioactive one. Israel has a similar military capacity with respect to Lebanon. Asymmetrical warfare, in which the high tech, high firepower military of some superpower is valiantly held at bay by heroic guerrilla forces using hit-and-run tactics, simple low technology weapons and logistics, and popular support, is not the guarantee of victory its proponents would have us believe. Mao's famous dictum—that the guerrilla swims like a fish in the sea of the people—suggests the most obvious counterstrategy. To defeat the guerrilla, you have to dry up the sea, one way or another. If the US in Vietnam, or Israel in Lebanon, had been willing to commit total destruction and mass genocide, they both had the military capability to win their respective wars. Fortunately, wars are not fought solely on the basis of military might.

When Rome bestrode the known world, it was not merely the sole superpower of its day. It was civilization itself. The world today is rife with civilization, most of it not American. Thanks to two brutal world wars, the civilized world drew up rules of warfare that were codified into the Geneva conventions. During the Cold War, the west under US leadership had to contend and compete with a sizeable Communist Bloc, which claimed to be a viable alternative to capitalist civilization. Back then, there were also those who championed nonalignment. Up until quite recently, the US was hemmed in by countervailing powers and international protocols in the global arena.

America's unipolar moment after the collapse of the Soviet Union lasted for about a New York minute, replaced by a far more dangerous and unstable multipolarity that Timothy Garton Ash describes chillingly in "New World Disorder" (*Guardian Weekly*, 7/28-8/3/06). Had the US retained its status as the world's lone, omnipotent superpower and remained a neoconservative wet dream, with the potential to leave its mark on humanity for millennia to come, much as Rome did, there would still be limits to US military muscle. Unrestrained by rival powers or Geneva conventions, imperial Rome had no qualms about relocating or eradicating tribes, peoples, and nations if they proved troublesome to the empire. In our time, Fascist and Communist regimes have demonstrated a similar imperious approach to groups, peoples, and nations deemed undesirable, rebellious, or antagonistic. Brazenly wiping out another country, however, would wreak havoc with America's claim to be a lib-

eral, freedom-loving, rights-respecting democracy with moral leadership over the west, if not the world. Even the neocons envision the US as exercising a democratic imperialism to reshape the rest of the world in its image.

More important than the international constraints on the US ruling class are domestic limitations in the form of military morale and popular support. Make no mistake; America didn't lose in Vietnam militarily, or because of international pressures. Growing antiwar sentiment in the general public and open revolt in the US military were major factors in the US defeat. Totalitarian dictatorships completely impervious to international law and sanction are still quite vulnerable to domestic circumstances, for even the most despotic government needs at least the tacit consent of the governed in order to stay in power. Gene Sharpe, in his comprehensive three-volume study *The Politics of Nonviolence*, demonstrates that regimes often considered utterly ruthless, like Nazi Germany, yielded to nonviolent resistance by their citizenry. A demoralized military and a disgruntled public were important causes of the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan as well.

The Geneva conventions, international opprobrium, and America's self-acclaimed status as a liberal western democracy no doubt will keep the US military from using the overwhelming force necessary to destroy the Iraqi insurrection. Yet ultimately, what will defeat the US intervention in Iraq is the home front—widespread criticism of the war in the general population and growing resistance to the war in the all-volunteer military.

The antiwar opposition that presently exists has already been accused of aiding and abetting America's enemies. It would be disingenuous to deny that elements of this antiwar movement actively work for the victory of Islamic jihadists in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, and elsewhere. During the Vietnam War there were antiwar activists who chanted "Ho Ho Ho Chi Minh, the NLF is going to win," provocatively flew VietCong flags during peace demonstrations, and celebrated when Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese Army. In the "War on Terror" there are those who follow another Maoist dictum that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" by excusing or supporting fundamentalist Islamic terrorism. Then there are the Leninist whackjobs behind the ANSWER Coalition who once argued that because mass murderer Saddam Hussein resisted American imperialism he was "objectively progressive" and deserving of support, a contemptible formula they've no doubt applied to what they call the Iraqi Resistance.

What the apologists and supporters of the jihadi forces arrayed against the US around the world conveniently leave unsaid is that these are despicable fanatics committed to a reprehensible ideology that seek to destroy, not just American hegemony and western culture, but everything that is not Islam. Excuse me, but these are folks who ban TV, film, and popular music; who put women in burkhas, deny them education, and murder them for the slightest infractions of honor; who cut off the right hand of a hungry man who steals bread while absolving the man who beats his wife to death for talking back. Simply said, Al Qaida, Hamas, Hezbollah, the Taliban, *et al* are the vilest, most reactionary elements in Islam.

Unfortunately, it looks like Islamic fundamentalism—either in Sunni jihadist form or Iran-style Shia theocracy—will be the hands down winner in Iraq if the US admits defeat and withdraws. Now comes the hard part. This is actually no reason not to work for an immediate, unconditional American withdrawal from Iraq. The US invasion and occupation of Iraq was fucked from the get go, based on oil and neocon fantasies of democratic empire, sold to the American public through pretexts and lies, an unmitigated disaster that is compounding day by day. That our overthrow of Saddam produced a virulent Sunni jihadi resistance and an imminent Shia fundamentalist takeover means that the US is now hoist with its own petard. You don't have to support reactionary Islamic assholes in order to realize it's important that America go down to defeat in Iraq.

Being "Lefty" Hooligan, I just can't resist another example of the concept I began this column with that also takes a swipe at one of the more pompous icons of punk rock. Some years ago, Jello Biafra was sued by his former bandmates for shoddy business practices. The other band members won in court, and Jello's record company, Alternative Tentacles, lost control of the Dead Kennedys' back catalog. It was good that Jello lost because, after all, he was cheating his former bandmates out of royalties. It was bad that the other band members won because they proceeded to make a mockery of everything the Dead Kennedys had stood for. They hired pretty boy Brandon Cruz as frontman and went on a Dead Kennedys reunion tour that saw Brandon deliver patriotic speeches praising America's intervention in Afghanistan. They've turned the Dead Kennedys into a travesty, yet that's no reason Jello should not have lost in court. By the same token, Jello's fraudulent business dealings in no way pardon the other Dead Kennedys band members of their idiocy, greed, and crass opportunism.

Now that's the good, the bad, *and* the ugly.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA... To find out my real name purchase my book, *End Time*, from AK Press (POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682) for $10. The book is called *Fim* in Portuguese and can be ordered from Conrad Editora (R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil) for R$ 24,90. I can be contacted at hooligentsia@mac.com.

I was looking at some recent columns of mine and realized they've been on the heavy/serious side. Hell, one of them got me in a bit of trouble but I think I'll skip the explanation so the situation won't be further exacerbated (that's to make something worse for those of you who don't know what the fuck I mean or don't have a dictionary nearby). All this negativity is to be expected, I suppose, because, as always, there's plenty to be pissed off about. So perhaps I'll lighten the mood a little this month and stick to music. Although the following topic may well stir up some controversy—I'm about to defend the "legacy" of one of Boston's most-controversial hardcore punk bands from "back in the day." That's right, I'm talking about the FU's.

I got the idea for this column while I was out on my daily walk one day last week and was listening to *My America* on my MP3 player. I was thinking about how well their music has aged. In fact, I'd argue that this is not only the best FU's record, but, along with Jerry's Kids' *Is This My World*, one of the two best Boston hardcore records from that era. The FU's certainly embraced the hardcore speed on their first two records, *Kill For Christ* and *My America*, as well as their earlier tracks from the *Boston Not LA, Unsafe At Any Speed* and *Master Tape* compilations. But there was always a snotty punk rock element to go along with the hardcore and a wise-assed, sarcastic lyrical approach. The FU's' influence can be heard in such current bands as Career Suicide and Direct Control, to name a couple. They definitely didn't take themselves seriously and would joke around while playing or doing interviews.

Going back to the beginning, I first saw the FU's in the Fall of '81 when they were a three-piece, with John Sox (Stocking) on bass and vocals, Steve Grimes on guitar and Bob Furapples (Hatfield) on drums. They weren't very good. This lineup recorded a decent demo, though, in more of a punk vein. They soon got Wayne Maestri (going under the name Joe Rockhead, at first) on bass. With this lineup in place, the FU's improved quite a bit, especially live, and their first officially released recordings were on the *Boston Not LA* compilation (plus one song on the 7" EP comp *Unsafe At Any Speed* and two on the

Master Tape comp). The songs were faster and the highlight is a humorous cover of Sgt. Barry Sadler's "Green Beret" with a few lyrical adjustments: *"You better talk and do it fast/Or we'll stick a rocket up your ass/Killing gooks is fucking cool/We're the Green Beret and we're fucking cool."* One of my favorite memories from back then is at a show in December of '82, where the FU's played with the Misfits at a church in Cambridge and, when they played "Green Beret" and Sox got to the part where he yells "Hit the beach!," a bunch of people ran from the back of the stage and dived into the crowd. "Preskool Dropouts" uses irony to critique a poor educational system—interesting since Sox later became a teacher.

Kill For Christ came out in '82, complete with Pushead artwork of a machine gun-toting Jesus, and starts off with "Civil Defense" that has Sox yelling "THIS IS NOT A TEST OF THE EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM," adding "Mommy! Mommy!" before the thrash kicks in. Plenty of satire along with bile, as they take on the Boston rock establishment ("Daisy Chain"), cock rockers ("Rock and Roll Mutha") and nazi skinheads ("Trendy Nazi Hypocrite"). "FU" and "Peer Police" both take a slap at conformity in the punk scene, a theme that would be repeated later on. Mainly loud 'n' fast, with the exception of the five-plus minute dirge of "Die For God," a musical counterpoint although it goes on a bit long. With *Kill For Christ*, though, the band made their mark (The CD includes the demo and comp tracks).

The FU's *really* came into their own on the aforementioned *My America*, starting with "What You Pay For," an excoriation of whom they viewed as blind followers in the hardcore community. For all the talk about "think for yourself," the FU's threw it back in their faces and asked if people really *were* thinking for themselves, instead of following someone else's lead. Hell, I was guilty of that, since I would often take cues from hardcore lyrics/bands although I think it was more a matter of stimulating my thought processes instead of taking the words at face value. Ehh... who the fuck am I kidding? The 23-24 year old me was an incredibly naïve person and the current 46 year old incarnation both cringes and is amused by that individual.

Getting out of third person mode, "What You Pay For" shouts loud and clear *"Giving nothing... asking nothing... promising nothing... delivering nothing"* and *"Go find some hero to jerk you off/Feel safe and righteous and you'll pay the cost."* Quite an opening salvo and, by the way, there's a great breakdown in middle.

But *My America*. Man, that album caused a *shitstorm* with some people when it was released in 1983. I know that a certain Mr. Yohannan took the album the wrong way. I have his review right here in my yellowed, stinky copy of *MRR* #8. Tim liked the music but wrote, *"The lyrics, on the other hand, tread a fine line between obnoxious satire and mindless reaction, and after conducting an interview with them in which they stated "America Rules" in all seriousness, adding that immigrants entered the US because they were "too dumb to run their own governments," it's all too apparent that theirs is a regressive mentality better suited to fraternity jocks than so-called punks."* It was a stock cover, with "The FU's—My America" stamped over the sunrise over the mountain motif and a picture of General George Patton on the back. They covered Grand Funk's "We're An American Band." That summer, they also played a show in Cambridge with the Big Boys (!) and had an American flag behind them—someone from the DIY space Media Workshop wrote a review of the show in *Smash* fanzine and claims that when the flag disappeared for a few minutes and was recovered, someone waved it in her face and went "America—yeah!" I have to admit that's dumb. Boston did have a reputation for being something of a conservative or, at the very least, apolitical scene, although the Proletariat played shows with these bands and their politics were decidedly leftist.

The issue after the review of *My America* got printed, there was a transcript of the interview they did on the *MRR* radio show and a pair of letters from people taking issue with the review of *My America*. One of these letter writers was Mike Gitter from *xXx* fanzine, who said he felt *"lucky to live in a country where I'm free to express my opinions in the form a fanzine... in other countries this freedom is repressed and people who vocalize a contrary policy are often harshly punished."* It wasn't really true then, it definitely isn't true now—the fact that there aren't repercussions for those who expose a contrary attitude. I suppose that the FU's did expose some not-so-latent nationalist sentiments from some of the locals, though.

In the interview, the band is definitely being wise-asses and make some comments meant to get under people's skin. But John, at the end, provides the logic behind "My America": *"What I really hate is seeing these kids who want to be 'cool punk kids in the scene'... they go out and buy this anti-Reagan t-shirt or something like that and they don't even know what's going on ten feet in front of their face. They just do it to be cool, just jumping on the bandwagon... I had those people in mind when I wrote "My America."*

I never interviewed the FU's but knew the guys casually, John mainly. Talking to him about it in recent years, the indication was that it was meant to tweak some people's hyper-sensitivities and dogmatism, and it obviously did the job. I mean, I don't agree with the "America rules" mentality. There was probably an element of reality in that stance. I'm far from patriotic. While I don't consider myself "ultra-PC" these days, I'll call people on their shit when I see/hear it. But I think I understand the spirit in which *My America* was meant. Truth be told, some of the dogmatic, holier-than-thou types do need to a good kick in the ass from time to time and to get over themselves.

For all the alleged conservatism, this is one pissed-off sounding record. *Kill For Christ* seems almost a light-hearted in comparison, although it clearly wasn't. On *My America*, the FU's upped the ante. The guitar has more power and the arrangements create a sonic firestorm. There are also some vehemently anti-authoritarian sentiments—the anti-cop message of "Boston's Finest," with one of the *sickest* circle pit parts of the early '80s. Seriously, whenever this comes on, I sing along loud and clear: *"Respect my badge/Respect my power/Respect my uniform/Respect my authority."* I imagine it freaks people along my walk route to hear someone singing those words a cappella, at least to them. I don't care.

As for the FU's being jocks, "Choir Boy" is about privileged jocks who get away with murder because of their social status. "The Grinder" is about how people often live in a fantasyland (*"Life of defiance would be neat/But first you gotta fucking eat"*) and how the so-called new society that some want to build often leads to the same regressiveness (*"Soon you will forget your cause/And rewrite all the same old laws."*). It's a cynical attitude that probably counters idealism and I know that some believe punk can change the world. Hell, I did at one point. I still look at myself as being out of step with the so-called "norms," but wonder if this world is beyond any sort of hope or change. In recent years, especially, it's difficult for me to feel any other way. I have a healthy (?) amount of cynicism, myself, although I suppose it came a bit later in life than for those guys. Also, for all the negativity and venting, "Unite or Lose" is about standing up for what you believe in and not running away from conflict. Having your friends' backs. Doesn't sound regressive to me.

After *My America*, the FU's released one more album under that name—*Do We Really Want To Hurt You*. Another cover to piss certain people off, as they posed on top of a tank and Sox was wearing a shirt with a flag and it said "USA—Live Free or Die." They refined their sound to more of a rock 'n' roll approach, while keeping some of the punk and hardcore influences. Sox started singing in a lower register instead of the ranting style he'd utilized up to that point. Not a bad album, with a similar amount of sarcasm, but there was a noticeable musical change, especially when they brought in lead guitarist Steve Martin (later with Agnostic Front) after

the album's release and changed their name to the Straw Dogs soon after. That completed the transition to straightforward rock.

I'm sure some of the old-timers or even youngsters will take me to task for my appreciation/defense of this band. I recently had to explain the deal with the FU's to a 30 year-old who didn't know the whole story. But I offer no apologies. Hell, on the "Kill From The Heart" website (co-founded by this zine's Chris Hubbard), the FU's are lauded as "a band we love very much," although there's a link to an interview with Bob where his pro-America slant does seem unironic. By the way, KFTH is still one of the best punk and hardcore archives out there and I'd say that even if Chris wasn't one of the coordinators of *Maximumrockrnoll*. Check it out online at http://homepages.nyu.edu/~cch223/mainpage.html for the FU's page and much more. You should pay particular attention to what Steve Grimes wrote about *My America*: *"We were punk rockers, playing for other punk rockers, being discussed in the punk rock media and ignored everywhere else. We knew damn well we were going to be heard almost exclusively by people that 'thought like us;' indeed, that was the problem. It's hard to imagine today how homogeneous the hardcore crowd was back then. This was partly a strength—it gave us an identity—but it's better to deal with, you know, other types of people."* Get it?

Looking through what I've written here and with my reputation for being a complete left-wing/subversive/whatever, I imagine there may be some contradictions. It's just a gut feeling more than anything that these guys weren't complete "flag masturbators," to use a phrase from Jello in a DK's interview that I once did. And I think Steve's essay more or less confirms that these guys were *not* right-wingers. Check it out. It's a great read.

So much for lightness. Just goes to show that I tend to evaluate and re-evaluate a lot of things, music included, as I get older, if not wiser. The passage of time does tend to change one's outlook and perspective. Trust me on that one. It's always a balancing act between idealism and reality.

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Lots of reviews this time—hope you don't mind. I've been clearing out the review pile a bit and some killer music showed up this month, as well.

CARDIAC ARREST – Life's a Dead End (Grave Mistake/No Way, 7" EP)

Another rip-roarin' dose of hardcore from St. Louis band Cardiac Arrest. Rob's Choke-inspired rant is at the fore and, as always, the band's basic, fast hardcore connects dead-on. "End of the Line" starts with the lines "Everyday I fight the urge to put a knife in your face/Gonna snap, I'm gonna snap." That's why hardcore is such good therapy for all of us—what better way to get that shit out of your system? Cardiac Arrest haven't disappointed yet. (www.gravemistakerecords.com or www.nowayrecords.com)

DEEP SLEEP – You're Screwed (Grave Mistake, 7" EP)

I like the feel of this one—a retro hardcore punk sound emphasizing the punk, if that makes sense. Catchy songs at mainly a medium-to-fast speed, although "Alone With You," "Another Day," and "Sick Sick Boredom" pick up the pace. The mid-Atlantic region seems to have some cool bands in this vein—Direct Control, Government Warning, and now these guys. (PO Box 12482, Richmond, VA 23241, www.gravemistakerecods.com)

THE DISGRACE – The Original Unreleased 1979 Album (Welfare, CD)

The Disgrace was a NYC band that included Steve Wishnia, later in False Prophets, and vocalist Butch Lust, who was later in the Hypocrites. The story is they never had an "official" release back then, having broken up soon after recording these eight songs. A little off-key vocally, a little out of tune at times, but a Killed By Death score, nonetheless. The Disgrace gets by on sheer attitude and snottiness, especially for the leadoff song "Not With You" and "Closet Punk." I'd imagine that by '79, things had turned increasingly artsy-fartsy or watered-down in NYC and these miscreants still forged ahead with their spirited noise. One minor quibble—I wish there had been some liner notes telling the story—I had to get the info from Mike from Welfare Records. (58 River St., Haverhill, MA 01832, www.welfarerecords.net)

DROGUES – No Facts That Don't Fit (Waxbrain, CD)

Allan from this fine publication and Giant Haystacks mentioned that this Bay Area band were friends of theirs and the Drogues are cut from the same post-punk cloth. A heavy-duty Minutemen/Gang of Four influence. "Transport Devices," in fact, channels D. Boon's vocal delivery. As with those bands, there's political content but not the type that hits you over the head. It's subtler and often personalized. Sparse and minimal yet with busy instrumental interplay, as the sharp guitar duels with bass-lines darting in and out and shifting drum patterns. "Something's Receding" takes a poppier turn. These guys really *are* a post punk band, in the traditional sense of the word, and that's meant to be complimentary. (www.thedrogues.com)

GOVERNMENT WARNING – No Moderation (Feral Ward, LP)

Smokin' hardcore from Richmond's Government Warning, following an earlier 7". Fast? Check. Memorable songs? Check. Some similarities to Direct Control, with whom they share a few members on different instruments (Brandon plays drums and Mike plays guitar here). One difference is Kenny's snottier ranting vocals and perhaps more of a West Coast feel, especially for the mid-tempo "Fat Nation" and "Sick of Home." right down to Brandon's drumming. Descriptions, descriptions. Just play it loud and it'll hook ya real quick. (www.feralward.com)

NARDWUAR THE HUMAN SERVIETTE VS. BEV DAVIES – A 2007 Punk Rock Calendar (Mint, calendar!)

Here's a first—a calendar sent for review. Nardwuar, one of the more unique interviewers on the planet. His work appears in *Razorcake* 'zine and on his own site (www.nardwuar.com). Here he reminisces with photographer Bev Davies, who contributes striking vintage photos of such bands as Gang of Four, Pointed Sticks, Clash, Ramones, DOA (a photo that appeared on the back of *Hardcore '81*) and others—even a picture of G'N'R's Duff McKagan in his punk days, playing with the Fastbacks. Half of them are live, half are "photo shoot"-type pictures, although they have a candid quality, such as Gang of Four clowning around, which belies their assumed seriousness. They talk about the artists and the stories behind them. There's also an extensive interview with more photos. So it's more than just a calendar but also a document. I usually hang wall calendars in my bedroom/record room and office and that means I only have to get one more for next year. Good job. (PO Box 3613, Vancouver, BC V6B 3Y6, CANADA, www.mintrecs.com)

OUTBREAK – Failure (Bridge Nine, CD)

Wow, this is a rager. It's an outbreak (arrgh!) of blazing fast hardcore punk with breakdowns that, thankfully, don't break out the chug. That's right, *punk*. The production is clean and gives it a modern ambiance, yet Outbreak do a good job of combining early '80s and late '80s hardcore influences. I'd still rather hear a rougher/raw production for hardcore, but the band's power comes blasting through. The best band from Maine since, uh, the Pinkerton Thugs? (PO Box 99052, Boston, MA 02199, www.bridge9.com)

PISSCHRIST – Nothing Has Changed (Yellow Dog, CD)

Nope it hasn't—not in the world today and not with modern-day Swedish-style hardcore, as played by this Australian band. I'm grateful for the latter, at least. Pisschrist feature the rampaging tempos, set-on-burn guitars, and low-register howlings associated with the sound. And with such titles as "The River Runs Red," "Mass Genocide Machine,"

and "Fuck The World," there's no chance of missing their point. They've got me hooked. (PO Box 550209, 10372 Berlin, GERMANY, www.yellowdog.de)

RED THREAD (tape)

I always get this band's name wrong—thought it was Red Threat and, actually, it works better since they're certainly make a threatening sound. Three-quarters of the short-lived band 40 Watts (who put out a good demo and broke up almost immediately after), with a different guitar player. Garage/punk/riot grrrl—if that's still an appropriate term. Forceful words, from the anti-tampon message of "Blood Song" to protecting oneself from unprotected sex to the topical "Bowery," about the grad student from Massachusetts, Imette St. Guillen, who was raped and murdered in New York City, her body dumped away from the crime scene. That was a perfect example of some in the mainstream media "blaming the victim," saying that she brought it on herself for being out alone at 4 AM. Red Thread's answer is self-defense and not living in fear. Jen lets out some nasty screams along with her singing and the band plays with grittiness—and that's meant in a positive way.
(punxisladies @gmail.com)

RUNNAMUCKS – Inferno (Six Weeks, CD)

The Runnamucks move away from their thrash sound to a mid-tempo harder-rocking sound meets punk, having added a new drummer and lead guitarist (the App brothers, Daniel and Bryan) along the way. There isn't metallic bluster, even with the lead lines. The guitar tone remains pretty much the same. The standout track here is the fired-up boogie rocker "Untouchable." If they come up with more songs like that next time around, I won't have any reservations about the transition at all. It's taken awhile for me to get into this album yet there's definitely been an improvement in the playing—especially the drumming. Also, after having seen some of these songs live, *Inferno* has definitely grown on me. (225 Lincoln Ave., Cotati, CA 94931, www.sixweeksrecords.com)

SPITZZ – Touché Pussycats (Tario, CD)

For all the heavy rep Boston has as a garage rock-friendly town, there have only been a few bands that really live up to it and the Spitzz have emerged as one of those bands. They follow the simple is better method, drawing on various punk, rock and garage influences, unafraid to borrow on occasion—such as the "Nervous Breakdown" cop for "Channel One." *Touché Pussycat* is the band's second album and continues the level of quality from their debut, *Sick Savage and Sensual*. Confident and fired-up. (53 Beacon St., #3, Somerville, MA 02143, www.spitzz.com)

THROBBIN URGES (Dead Beat, CD)

Loud, blown-out garage punk mania. I love the rawness, I love the fact these songs rock like a motherfucker. The Pretty Things had a comp called "Feel The Buzz" and it can definitely be felt here. Whomp, whomp, whomp and then some. (PO Box 283, LA, CA 90078, www.dead-beat-records.com)

TODAY'S OVERDOSE – s/t (Profane Existence/Wasted Sounds, 7" EP)

This band includes all the members of Wolfbrigade except the bass player. When Dan from Profane handed me a copy of this EP, he mentioned they had a Poison Idea influence and that's accurate, merged with a crusty edge. "Insomnia" deviates a bit with a rock 'n' roll feel, with some speedy segments for good measure. The best song on here and they're off to a hell of a start. (PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN, www.profaneexistence.com)

VÖETSEK – A Match Made In Hell (Six Weeks, CD)

Collections of singles, splits, etcetera, etcetera. Thrash, thrash, and more thrash, along with some metal/crossover influences such as Napalm Death. Eruptive, yet I sometimes think this band would benefit from having their songs be a little more structured and a bit longer. That does happen on occasion—"White Ain't Right" is a perfect example. It seems like speed for speed's sake and Ami sounds as though she's having difficulty getting all the words in. Tight as hell, though. How do they remember all those songs?! (225 Lincoln Ave, Cotati, CA 94931, www.sixweeksrecords.com)

WITCH HUNT – Blood-Red States (Profane Existence, LP)

A lineup shift as Witch Hunt beef up their sound, with Rob moving from drums to guitar and the band adding a new drummer. Rob also has an increased amount of vocal duties. A peace punk band and I'm not just saying that because of the peace symbols on the fold-out sleeve and record label. It's a stylistic influence, both in terms of the lyrical matter and sound. Raging, impassioned music with a combination of speed and melody. "War Coma" brings Crucifix to mind. The title track draws together the war in Iraq and the indifference towards the victims of Hurricane Katrina as part of the current administration's pure evilness. Witch Hunt really comes into its own here. By the way, that aforementioned sleeve, a drawing by Rob that pictures a dead man sprawled across the blood red states, is an appropriate visual accompaniment. (PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.profaneexistence.com)

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On the Lookout for Something Else.

I remember having a conversation with my friend Amy a few years back about how she doesn't consider herself a punk anymore, and how her idea of punk was so inherently linked to what she saw as a regurgitated subcultural museum diorama or a lame performance art pastiche that she couldn't see it as anything other than a cheezy dude puking in an alleyway clad in a studded leather jacket. Growing up in London, the postcard punks totally defined my idea of punk too, the wasted time spent just hanging out on the King's Road or Picadilly Circus mooching off tourists, fulfilling their idea of London, a pound for a photo with an East German Exploited fan. Punks in full costume, most of whom weren't actually from England but were there as subcultural tourists themselves, trying to find an outlet for their imaginary idea of the authentic punk lifestyle after most trad-dad UK punks abandoned ship. The punk idea muted after being flogged to death on TV advert cartoon like compilation tapes, another ghost of a cultural movement laid to rest. Perhaps because of it's reliance on the shock of the new, which soon became the set-in-stone signifiers of what "punk" is, thus the eternal cliché of the postcard punk, if that makes sense. I mean that the initial idea of punk eventually became another capitalistic formula, another way to sell product rather than produce ideas. Things become static. While some people obviously took the possibilities of punk to heart and made it in their own image, for some people punk will always be a cartoon of Sid Vicious, an empty salute to a mythical past.

I think I have already written about this too much maybe, but it's something I think about a lot, the notion of punk as a transient idea rather than a fixed reality. It probably has a lot to do with growing older and just being more reflective in general about the main thing that has shaped my life. How when you are young it feels like things are happening everywhere that you aren't, and then as you age things feel like they have already happened and all that's left are formaldehyded memories of glory days. It's so depressing to me that people get stuck on this one moment,

the idea of youth as your last chance for freedom, which I think is such a shitty capitalistic construct used to sell jeans and skin cream lifestyles to people who think their moment has passed. Punk is for some a snapshot of their youth, frozen in time, forever to be xeroxed onto all their future endeavors, rather than just the idea of total possibility that can be applied to whatever it is that they happen to be doing. I know some people are doomed to be crushed by life, and probably, uh, that applies to everyone at some point. And maybe going on a reunion tour seems like a good idea, because the last time you felt alive or connected to anything was when you were in your teenage hardcore band so why not attempt to reproduce said experience with a collection of dissatisfied, beer-bellied, middle aged men...? I mean, most reunion tours are little more than crass cash-ins on nostalgia hungry audiences; I am just attempting to figure out aging "punk" motivations beyond that I guess. The Ramones/Germs/Flipper show in particular kind of blew me away, just the fucking concept, especially in the case of the Germs and Flipper, whose appeal to me at least lies in their total disgust for authenticity in music. They both made totally disposable youthful yet terrifying and disparaging music, the sound of mocking laughter and mean pranks and alienated brains, the exact opposite of what they are doing now, pantomiming an idea long lost to their age-addled brains. And I am sure it's been said, but the dead members of said bands are surely rolling in their graves. It's so ridiculous it's hard to even comment on it seriously. Anyone who went to that show thinking that it was anything other than the ultimate rip-off (and thusly maybe punk? Maybe??) is clearly a lunk-headed goon.

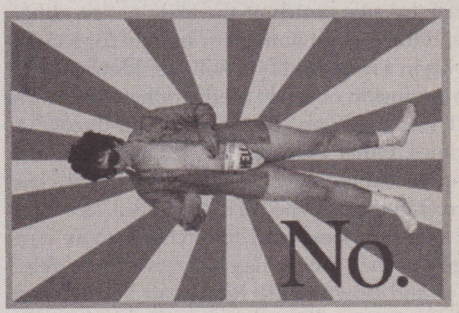
We have to stop allowing space (i.e. stop giving them our money) to lame nostalgic old men who once were maybe dangerous and made exciting sounds but whose vision is now coated in a congealed, buttery-like substance, which is reflected in their creative output. I am not saying that once you reach a certain point you should not be allowed to make music anymore in any way. Just that we need to stop deifying the past and the people who are trapped there. I had to review a Nikki Sudden 7" last month, and that, while not at all replicating anything the Swell Maps did sonically, depressed me too. It was straight bar room country music, so boring and trite coming from a man who basically reinvented DIY punk. It felt like another old man trying to find his roots, or some kind of authenticity, and I understand why punks like country music, it's good music from a rebel perspective (well the good stuff, not the shitty radio country-politician elevator music) but it seems like such a well-worn, cornball path. So the two musical options for growing old and staying punk are being in a poser synthesis of your past musical endeavours or yowling lame truck stop diner myth country truisms? *So boring.*

It's difficult because any punk music made now is inherently nostalgic, it's always going to refer to the past in a way that maybe it didn't have to in the beginning stages of its inception. It's become a reverent movement, where knowledge of obscure forefathers of Scandi-beat or whatever is requisite. I think one of the distinguishing factors that separates the music I like (ha!) from generic replicant music is that good music references the past perhaps, but ultimately makes something different and new out of it. One of my favorite records right now is the Criminal Damage LP, or as I like to say, CrimDam, which is pretty clearly a Blitz tribute, but there's something else about it that doesn't exist in the other 60 zillion shitty cardboard oi!-lite bands in existence now, a feeling in the music, yet it still sounds so classic and time capsule like. Also Lebenden Toten—the influences are so clear and yet listening to it is totally brutal in the best way. It's not generic, there's some weird quality to it that makes it transcend the confines of the influences or the imprint of the past.

As information relating to olden days music has become less obscure and less guarded by the salivating record nerds, also because of all of the reissues and the sheer availability of information on the internet more good bands should come into existence. I like seeing bands that are clearly influenced by obscure Japanese noise flexis *and* Huggy Bear *and* Really Red. Not that I have, but you know, it would be rad. I think that's why I love Mika Miko so much, because they have the possibility explosion of old Kleenex 7"s with the guitar sounds and snot nosed vengeance of the *First Four Years*. It's such an inspiring combination of ideas, and seeing them play at house shows and basements and all ages spaces just reaffirms the true excitement of possibilities of DIY punk. The audience and the band members totally losing it, sweaty and ridiculous and all for under five dollars! So far away from some tame Slits reunion show, nothing they do now as the Slits will ever recapture the total insanity and genius and collapsibility of their first Peel Session or their demo. Nothing. They are totally cashing in on something that was dangerous and fierce and making it a lame world beat old lady jam band compost heap. I think of punk as ridiculous and embarrassing, fun and brave and dumb, good times and total hell all at once. As soon as you lose the idea of punk as being anything other than kicks and freedom and community it just becomes another museum piece. I mean it in both the way people in the scene use their influences now and in the way people of the past exploit their musical histories. I have this old fanzine, *Germ of Youth*, in which the editor keeps writing "Punk Rock is an endless adventure" somewhat ironically I am sure, but I feel like that should be the case. It isn't a prison cell or a rule book or a fancy dress costume. It's a mess and it's yours. It's disposable and it's permanent and contradictory but it's ours and we have to make it good or else it'll just be a bunch of old men rotting in a bar talking about watching Black Flag in '82. *Anyways...*

Top ten for the winter months:

1. Mika Miko at the Pine St. house!! Craziest show I have been to? Well this year maybe? We all got crucial, wasted, and some random person paint-bombed the room so we also got covered in paint. Mika Miko is so fucking good! And they make so much sense at a house show. Made me happy to be a punk/live in the Bay Area/have such rad friends. West Oakland is seriously like life after the apocalypse, though. The house was way out by the docks surrounded by these crumbling ghost town style buildings, there were random pit bulls running around, totally felt like that movie *Suburbia*. It was weird because the day felt so static and frozen then the evening was just totally insane and liberating and total kicks affirmative duvet ta etc etc. 2. Ultimo Resorte 12". Rad lady fronted Spanish punk. The singer kind of reminds me of Mai from Gorilla Angreb. Totally awesome. Also, Martin's story about how she punched out Nancy Spungeon. So punk. 3. Golnar's "Worst Records at MRR" set for the 1000th radio show. 4. Riding my bike after dark 5. *Ladies And Gentlemen The Fabulous Stains*; the song "Waste of Time" is the best song ever. Seriously. If anyone has this on a soundtrack please tape it for me. 6. Going vegan 7. black and white photobooths 8. Discarriage, latest Portland hype band for sure. I heard they were Champagne punks! 9. Swell Maps Peel Sessions 10. The Clean discography.



Pine Street is a popular punk house in West Oakland. It is owned by a black man and longtime Oakland resident, who has been happy to rent it out to a ragtag group of punk kids, largely indifferent to its use as a venue for shows—he used to go to punk shows himself, and I heard he volunteered at 924 Gilman a couple times in the early 1990s. The area of

West Oakland where Pine Street is has been predominantly black for over a century, Oakland has been a major incubator for black music and culture for at least that long, and hip hop culture, including graffiti and rap music, has had some of its most seminal moments in the area. In September, the Pine Street house was host to a Mika Miko show at which a (white) punk "graffiti crew," who call themselves ("jokingly") the Viking Skins, trashed the show room with an exploding permanent ink marker, causing indelible and difficult-to-paint-over stains on the rug and ceiling. The same night, two doors down the street, a DIY warehouse/venue for hip hop and soul music called Black New World was graffitied, though not by the same crew, but by (in the words of one Pine Street resident "a dumb-ass San Francisco graffiti hipster." Though residents of Pine Street woke up early, bought a bunch of paint, and scrambled next door to paint over the graffiti, the damage was already done and the insult was already dealt.

I live in Oakland, and I have for the past eight years. Though I was born here, I did not spend those oh-so-important "formative years" here, instead opting to move back in my early twenties. Although my father would deny it, my parents were arguably participating in the "white flight" of the '70s when they packed up and moved from their Victorian rental house near Oakland Technical High School to the low-priced, unincorporated suburb of El Sobrante, right next to Richmond but just out of sight of the oil refineries. My family was not poor, as both of my parents had decent jobs working for the public education system—my father at Fremont High in East Oakland (where he taught economics to classes that were mostly black), and my mother at Richmond High (where she worked in Special Education classes, also for a primarily black student base). Of course, as high school teachers, my parents were not rich by any stretch of the imagination either, and the modest home they bought for $35,000 was in a neighborhood with no sidewalks and a profusion of secret methamphetamine labs. It was also very pretty and near-bucolic at times. Other than the occasional report of a house exploding from a poorly timed cigarette in the presence of ether fumes, as a child I was rarely exposed to anything more dangerous than the reckless drivers who barreled up and down Santa Rita Road at all hours, free of the police presence that would have been more of an issue in a town with its own police force.

The danger of getting creamed by a meth-addled redneck in a big truck, however, was easily avoided by simply staying out of the street—something I had the luxury of doing. Once junior high began, the story changed. Over 2000 students filled the halls of Juan Crespi, from 15 or 20 miles in all directions, and made for a student body that was ethnically diverse in the extreme. Yet most of these kids were solidly in a working-class economic bracket by upbringing, the most well-off often having a parent who held down one of the few remaining solid union jobs at the oil refineries. The school was violent, and the student body was very much segregated by race despite similarities in their economic backgrounds; black and Latino students rarely fraternized with the white and Asian students. To me this never made much sense, but I was the child of a Marxist and a social justice activist, so I wasn't taught to step on my peers while attempting to fight my way up a rung on the stunted totem pole of the working class. The rest of the student body, however, went at the culture/"race" wars with verve and aplomb, and racially-motivated beatings from both sides were pretty common. The seemingly harmless music-listener battle of "Rockers vs. Soulers," generally split along color lines, masked a socio-cultural schism which goes deeper than simple economics in America—less encouragement from educators, discrimination from law enforcement, and absentee parentage (often in the form of one or more parents being dead or in prison) are just a few examples of the difficulties black and Latino students often must contend with, which places them at a distinct disadvantage even next to their white and Asian peers of a similar economic status.

Of course, these American socioeconomic realities are complex, and vary in character considerably from place to place and at different times. In the San Francisco Bay Area, the economic boom of the mid-1990s led to a rapidly intensifying trend of gentrification as educated, childless, newly-affluent young people swarmed to the inner cities in order to take advantage of minimal commute times to their highly specialized jobs. My friends and I, who had been considering moving to Oakland or San Francisco in order to be closer to burgeoning music and art scenes (not to mention unskilled job opportunities outside of the fast food industry), saw the writing on this new wall and decided that we could not afford to, nor would we want to, be part of this gentrification process. Several of us started to rent out cheap, communal houses in our increasingly degraded suburbs, at hundreds of dollars a month less than comparable dwellings in the cities. This allowed us to work our shitty jobs less and make music and art more, and even to try to draw others in to "enculturate" the wasteland of our low-rent suburbs. It didn't really work. The suburbs, by nature, resist culture; they are designed to be wastelands populated by self-contained nuclear families who never even know their neighbors' names. This is rigidly enforced; though you may never see a cop when rednecks are barreling down your road at 75 mph you can be sure of encountering at least one if you get a bunch of beautiful faggots and freaks over to your house for a party, particularly if music is involved. The suburbs, poor or rich, are a place that independent-minded young people tend to flee for their lives.

So, after a time, we gave up. Our landlord in Pinole decided he wanted a nice nuclear family to move in and was sick of dealing with a bunch of noisy, messy, artsy kids. We had an opportunity for cheap rent at a warehouse in Oakland, and we took it. None of us could be called a trust fund kid by a longshot, and I was the only one out of this group of kids who had even a semi-reliable family fall-back situation in case things got sticky—in other words, I was broke, while most of my friends who I moved there with were actually poor, and none of us was going to college. It is important to mention that everyone in this group was, more or less, white, and that does carry aforementioned real-world advantages and privilege. Marcel Diallo, Oakland-based artist, member of Black Dot collective, and proprietor of the Black New World, was recently interviewed in an East Bay Express article on Oakland's monthly "Art Murmur" gallery showcase, and he mentioned a very true fact: while punk hipsters can move to the ghetto and make a bunch of noise at a huge party, he couldn't exactly do the same thing in Piedmont, or even in the neighborhood where the Art Murmur is held, where a large crowd of mostly white and Asian people drink from forties in public. As Diallo says, "Duh. If there was six hundred black people drinking in the street, there'd be fucking barricades!," and this is borne through by the simple fact that every time a hip hop show occurs in the area the "Art Murmur" is held it is generally accompanied by a phalanx of cops made up of half the Oakland police force.

Despite surface appearances, however, these are complex issues, and go deeper than black and white or even rich and poor. For every slumming trust fund punk I know there's one who is from a background of poverty and is just looking for cheap rent in a place where getting around on a bike is possible and music can be made without the cops showing up immediately. The privilege of racial identity must be acknowledged, and the pseudo-colonialist adventurism by punks and artists to poor neighborhoods is almost always the arrow point of gentrification, as Diallo puts it. Yet, I feel there is a difference between the punks and artists looking for/needing relatively cheap rent and a place to work, and the developers and yuppies in their newly gated, razorwire-protected compounds in the same neighborhoods; the difference is that in the punks and artists there

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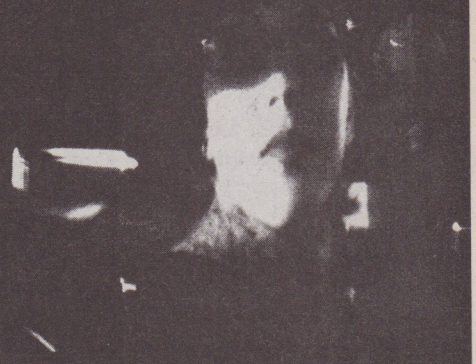

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are often activists and potential allies in the fight to affect positive change. They are also the ones who don't want the neighborhood's residents to move out, unlike the yuppies – with the possible exception of dipshits like the "Viking Skins," and particularly Mr. SF graffiti hipster, who are so unaware of their privilege and culture rape that, if they did graffiti the BNW and the neighborhood, they are worthy of nothing less than a serious ass-beating. These problems are economic at base, and the sensationalist phenomenon of white people taking over black people's neighborhoods is just a nasty symptom of what's really wrong.

What are the real problems? Poor social services and inadequate medical care for low-income citizens. A lack of city planning and regulation in building codes which allow developers to fill up our scant land resources with loft-style housing, which costs the same to rent per square foot but holds less than half the occupants a standard apartment building would hold—thus guaranteeing the pricing-out of anyone of a moderate or low income via artificial housing scarcity. Not enough government-mandated low-income housing. No effective rent control in Oakland. Not enough job training for good jobs, and not enough unions to protect those workers and help build an Oakland middle class again as there was during and immediately after WWII. In one of the biggest vestiges of officially-sanctioned discrimination, real estate zoning boards retain the legal right to appraise homes at a lower price in neighborhoods with more black residents – even if adjoining neighborhoods are far more expensive. A dangerously underfunded educational system, coupled with the institutionalized racism of law enforcement that is reliant on keeping privately owned California prisons filled with more young black and Latino men than there are in college.

These are the real problems faced by the inner cities. Gentrification, as with racism within this country, is a front for the preservation of economic and class injustice; a front that is perpetuated by both its beneficiaries and its victims. Regulation of unscrupulous investment and business practice and real, representative government, working for people, is what is needed to start the path towards healing these communities. In the meantime, however, if I find out who graffitied that building, there might have to be a little bit of an "educational intervention", preferably with a baseball bat. I live in Oakland and I love it here, fuckers. Don't shit on my town.

—Johnny Mink, P.O. Box 3026, Oakland, Ca. 94609 johngeek@hotmail.com

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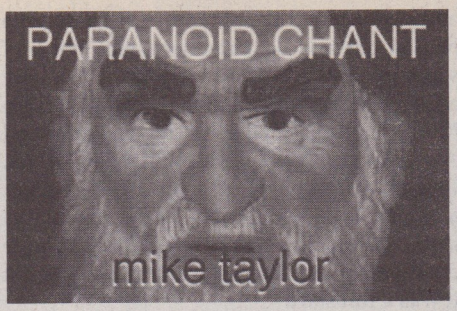


1. He didn't have an ID and was drinking. Now he's out on the sidewalk harassing passersby for a beer. However I personally feel about 21 as a legal drinking age, as long as bartenders are worried about losing their jobs, that's where we're at. On the sidewalk. In the rain. Soon, I have to ask him to leave.

Everyone outside of the show is drunk, and not from here, and beginning to over-identify with the crazy guy. They think he's a little sloshed and having fun. I've seen him around for years; I even kind of knew him as a regular when I worked at the library. He was a shy teenager, probably a little too smart, and slipping a little. Maybe his parents or teacher had him on meds he would occasionally forgo, or maybe I was actually seeing him lose it over the course of months.

Either way, here we were. Me, telling him to leave because I am pretty sure he's either gonna get his ass kicked soon or the cops called on him; he, telling me to back away because he could smell the evil on me. I wanted to whisper, "The police don't take kindly to crazy black teenagers — please go," but we made it past the point of polite exchange so fast. I had to wash my hands of it. I left him on the sidewalk, pantomiming shooting needles in his arm, working his mouth like he was singing an opera; angry-eyed, near shivering.

By the time the bar was wiped down and the chairs stacked solemnly, he was gone. Where he went, I won't know.

2. Everybody who's seen him in the hospital wears a helmet now. The first day I could go visit him, the face wasn't Brendan's. He had two plums where his eyes should be and a mouth made of cactus. His skull was cracked in four places and he had a broken back. He stayed under for two weeks and contracted pneumonia from the feeding tube down his throat. That was what did more damage than almost any injury he sustained in the accident.

Brendan works at the International Institute resettling immigrant families here in Providence. He was on his way to seal the deal on an apartment for an African family when, presumably, he was hit by a car. No one knows for sure, because there were no witnesses. His bike is untouched; yet on a clear day, an excellent cyclist tends to not make those kinds of mistakes … the kind that put you in the first percentile if you're ever able to tie your shoe again, much less walk.

It's assumed that someone hit him, and hard. They drove away down Elmwood, speeding up when they checked the rear view to see that the kid they hit wasn't getting up.

3. "I don't really eat when I'm hung-over. Well, I guess I had those two grilled cheeses. So I do."
"Yeah, I guess so."
"So why'd you do it, anyway?"
"Well I always knew I wanted to go into the service—"
"And go to Iraq?"
"Maybe. But anyway, it'll be two years and I'll have all the training I need for work. Plus, you know they caught me smoking."
"What? Who?"
"The cops. Me and two others. Well, not just smoking. They had one of those radars, and noticed all the red at our house, and just started watching the place. One day they came up when we were smoking and busted us. Two other guys are doing two years, but I guess since I'm so young, they gave me the option to join the service."
"That's a good reason to go, man."
Dude actually said that last part. Heard it at a bar. Didn't make it up.

Sorry it's been a while. Crazy summer, dudes. Write if you want, PO Box 28226, Providence, RI 02908. Happy 30th to Merry Death, Gus, and Baby Jessica.

A Quick Note

It's the beginning of September and the leaves are just starting to turn. It has been a year since I've gone traveling, and now I am back across the Atlantic.

The trip from San Francisco to London was brutal, and I don't think humans were meant to travel so quickly round the globe. It was a fourteen-hour journey covering five thousand miles, and an eight-hour time shift into the next day. I locked the solid metal door of my apartment on Mission Street behind me Thursday morning, the sun hot and bright, urban palm trees rustling in the breeze, a crowd waiting for the light at 24th, a woman selling fried sugar pastries on the corner from an aluminum pan. Mangoes two for a dollar,

piles of bananas, limes and oranges were stacked in wooden crates in the shade of vegetable stalls, spilling onto the sidewalk.

Late Friday afternoon, I was riding the London Underground in a daze, a construction worker falling asleep in the upholstered seat in front of me, English accents filling the air like glass bubbles, the smooth electric whoosh of the train moving from Heathrow into the city. A few hours later my too-heavy luggage of books (punk post to and from anarchist distributors), video equipment, and backpack was gone. I walked across Hackney Downs on green grass, looking up at low white clouds, a cool breeze on my face, talking with Jon, tired but perfectly happy in the moment.

Now, a few days later, I am in Bremen, Germany, surrounded by piles of books and metal bookcases filled with CDs and records, the smell of rolled tobacco. It is quiet in the house as I sit at a black wooden desk, typing at the Ruin Nation computer, trying to send this quick dispatch of thoughts to MRR headquarters.

Today I walked with Stivie down narrow cobblestone streets talking of life and events, catching kisses on the breeze. We passed by ancient row houses (one such house had a small stone sign announcing *renovations* done in 1835) covered in vines with small garden plots with flowers and trees in front by the street. The air smelled heavy of malt from the Becks brewery and I wore my jacket in the slight chill.

In contrast to the old buildings, there was vibrant grafitti and posters that had been put up as recently as yesterday. The image of an old woman stands out clearly in my mind (drawn by the excellent Danish artist Armsrock, look for a collection of his work in book form out sometime this year). Her profile was painted and drawn onto brown paper, cut out and then wheat pasted up. On the wall of the alley she appears like an earthy ghost, holding a large shopping type bag and wearing a conservative skirt, looking tired but alive. I like that she manifests there among the uniform brick, the rain molding the paper onto the wall, art on the street and shifting the urban landscape.

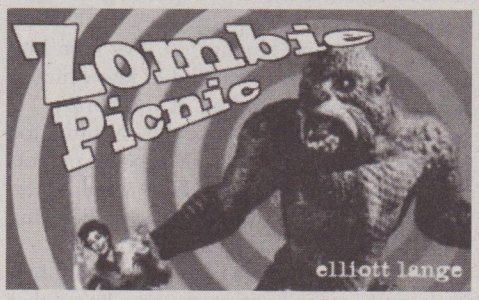
It is good to be back with friends who live too far away, and interesting to observe how what is at first seemingly so different and foreign, transforms into the familiar. It then becomes necessary to look closer, step back and take notice again. Like the woman pasted onto the wall, the small beauties of life are always there, but too often we simply pass them by. I remember to open my eyes, pause and take a look again.

End Notes:

As I was making my way here, the first episode of Channel Zero aired on television for the first time, on San Francisco's public access channel 29. Thanks to everyone who helped out and sent me such nice notes of support for my first attempt. I really appreciate it! Bands featured included Sahn Maru, Imperial Leather, The Restarts and Annihilation Time. Ramsey Kanaan of AK Press was interviewed in the studio about anarchism and why the hell he decided to join a folk band. There are things I could have done better and things I want to change, but it was a fun start.

You can see clips online on YouTube at www.youtube.com/profile?user=erikaransom. If you are interested in helping out, give me an email at e_bitchcerw@yahoo.com.

Cheers to the Bay Area punks, MRR, the Boston crew, Bound Together, 56@, Pogo Cafe and Active crew! More traveling tales next month. Solidarity and blazing guitars, Erika.



In case you missed it in the previous issue, this is my last column. Just don't have time to do all the things I need to, and well, unfortunately the fun stuff's gotta go. So, jumping right in, got tons to review before I go…

To start with, Billy from Razorback (www.razorbackrecords.com) sent over his latest four releases. Starting with the best of the bunch, we've got the new one from Creepsylvania's own GHOUL, *Splatterthrash*. I'm going to stick with my previous description of their sound as a cross between CARCASS and S.O.D., being a perfect mix of '80s marching martial mosh riffs with gurgling vocals and heaviness. Almost nothing here is less than awesome — they do a great job of inventing their own little horror comic book universe and deserve no small credit for having the first French-accented death growl (on "Merde!"). They're also probably the first to pull off surf guitar licks in death metal, and it's not even done ironically.

Next up is Seattle-area thrash-punks FUNEROT with *Invasion from the Death Dimension*. These guys got '80s crossover written all over 'em, though definitely more on the metal side. The raw, unpolished production and shouted vocals are straight-up hardcore, but the relentless thrashing guitars are metal all the way. These guys aren't interested in competing in the tech Olympics, they're just blazing thrash with short, no-filler songs, tons of hooks, entertaining subject matter ("Death by Drano," "The Man with the Megaton Mind"), and more balls than most. These guys, along with GHOUL, are making metal fun again.

Unfortunately, I can't get so excited about Razorback's two entries from the Portland metal scene, FRIGHTMARE and BLOOD FREAK, both fronted by the same guy: Maniac Neil. Despite well over two hours worth of material, there's barely a 45's worth of decent songs here. FRIGHTMARE's *Bringing Back the Bloodshed* features a seemingly well-informed blend of death and thrash, reminding me most of fellow Razorback mainstays ENGORGED. But like ENGORGED, they're incapable of keeping their tunes under five minutes; it's the fatal flaw of the album and it renders the songs repetitive, meandering, and booooooring.

Despite the shorter songs of Neil's side project, BLOOD FREAK, the grind/punk hybrid style doesn't fare much better. Most of the riffs are so utilitarian — cookie-cutter "I need another song so here's another riff" throwaways. It's almost embarrassing. I can't see anyone getting into this. Plus, with *Live Fast, Die Young…and Leave a Flesh-Eating Corpse!* the choice of album title and cover art are just as ill-advised.

In the tech-metal department, Willowtip (www.willowtip.com) comes through once again with two ridiculously extreme records, from DIM MAK and SULACO respectively. DIM MAK is three-quarters ex-members of New Jersey's beyond-legendary RIPPING CORPSE — the band directly or indirectly responsible for influencing everyone from HUMAN REMAINS to THE DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN. RIPPING CORPSE broke up long ago, and DIM MAK tried to pick up where they left off a few years later. Unfortunately, their first couple records just kinda sucked, lacking most of the guitar power (slipping into almost metalcore-ish torpor) and letting Scott Ruth's acquired-taste yelps get out of control. I don't know if it was jealousy over the badass-itude of THE DYING LIGHT (Brandon Thomas, drummer of RIPPING CORPSE's new band) or what, but they got their shit seriously kicked into high gear and back into classic form on *Knives of Ice*, their third release. Adding one of the fastest drummers on the planet, John Longstreth, didn't hurt either. The guy's playing is absolutely jaw-dropping. But the guitars deserve credit for rekindling the bizarre, slinky, off-time squeals and crushing riffs of *Dreaming with the Dead* (RIPPING CORPSE's only proper release), and Ruth's vocals are just mean — only occasionally are they unintentionally goofy. Definitely one of the best extreme releases of the year.

Rochester, New York's SULACO deliver their first full-length, *Tearing through the Roots*, after a previous EP on Relapse and a recent split 7" with SOILENT GREEN. SULACO fea-

tures the mighty guitar-slinging talents of Eric Burke, he of LETHARGY (and drummer of KALIBAS) infamy, whose relentless fretboard abilities are featured front and center on the thirteen tracks here. These guys are some of the most relentlessly noodly tech-metal practitioners in an increasingly oversaturated market of similar bands. *Roots* is a huge leap over the EP in my opinion — the songs are far catchier and more interesting, and perhaps even more structurally challenging than before.

Willowtip's got another good one coming in the form of ELECTRO QUARTERSTAFF's debut, *Gretzky*. I've only heard a couple tracks from it, but based on their previous self-released three-song *Swayze* EP, fans of the above-mentioned uber-tech style won't be disappointed. These Canadians ensure that no superfluous elements — such as bass or vocals — get in the way of the riffs, as their line-up is simply three guitars and a drummer. It's amazing how catchy these guys manage to be, nonetheless, with an endless barrage of non-repeating riffs and constant change-ups. They also do a crushing version of the Megaman theme music to Dr. Wiley's level.

Also teched out, but with a different, more subdued approach, is the debut full-length from SoCal's INTRONAUT, *Void* (Goodfellow, www.goodfellowrecords.com). Following up their *Null* EP from a few months back, *Void* is more diverse, tighter, and just plain better, building on the stylistic foundations established on the EP — slow to mid-pace rhythm fuckery over alternately super-heavy and spacey melodic passages, all nailed down by Danny Walker's (UPHILL BATTLE / PHOBIA) amazing drumming. I was a bit reserved with praise on the EP — too many riffs were less than stellar, and still they're not storming any barns near me. Overall though, I found myself nodding along much more with this one and think I'm finally ready to give 'em the thumbs up. I also finally figured out who they remind me of: CAVE IN, around the *Until Your Heart Stops* album- epic, off-beat and rocking, but way heavier.

The one decent stoner rock record of the month comes by way of Texas's LIONS OF TSAVO, who really don't even deserve that categorization. Get past the retarded *Tsunamicron* album title and the opening KYUSS riff, and you get a hard-to-pin-down mix of styles. The distorted vocals and pounding pace almost give it an early Am Rep vibe, but the heaviness and relentless delivery steer it more into the SABBATH realms of KARP, BARONESS, and HIGH ON FIRE. Short songs, endless changes, and a priceless *American Movie* sample make this one a winner (Ovrcast, www.ovrcast.com).

In the "complete ISIS/NEUROSIS clones" department, I'm going to review four bands at once, because that's about how distinct they are from one another. Every one of them has the same guitar sound, drum sound, ten-minute-average length songs, and complete faith that the listener will find their long plodding build-ups highly cathartic, intense, and sincere. DISAPPEARER (s/t, Trash Art, www.trashartrecords.com) and TIDES (*From Silence*, Teenage Disco Bloodbath, www.tdbrecords.com), both from New England, wisely keep the proceedings instrumental, which prevents Aaron Turner's vocals from getting in the way but doesn't do much to grab one's attention along the way, making for nice unobtrusive background listening but little else. Dayton, OH's MOUTH OF THE ARCHITECT could learn something from them on *The Ties that Blind* (Translation Loss, www.translationloss.com) — their vocals and general song structure are so blatantly lifted from NEUROSIS, it makes you wonder how they can keep a straight face, writing "Dispelling the past's ISIS and NEUROSIS comparisons, M.O.T.A. delve deeper into prog-metal territory…" on their album obi. Fortunately they do come up with a few go-to riffs to make a couple songs keepers, notably on "No One Wished to Settle Here" and "At Arms Length" but you still have to sludge through 15 minute songs to find them. Tennessee's GENERATION OF VIPERS likewise have one clutch riff on *Grace* (Red Witch, PO Box 781, Lenoir City, TN 37771), the awesome melancholic dirge of "A Great Deceiver" that almost excuses the remaining half hour of filler. Think I'll listen to *Souls at Zero* instead.

Perhaps influenced a bit more by (one of) Turner's other project, OLD MAN GLOOM, is ACROSS TUNDRAS's debut, *Dark Songs of the Prairie*, on Crucial Blast (www.crucial-blast.net). I gotta say, it takes a lot to get me to condone any sort of country influence in metal, especially as it gets ever trendier given the recent success of such turns from O.M.G., ISIS and EARTH. So I'm not completely sold on this Denver band's lonesome tumbleweed approach, but the fact that I'm not tossing this into the garbage on top of my own puke is testament that there's a few good things going on. The huge, blown-out, distorted sound is a plus, and several of the riffs are nicely evocative and somber, and somehow I don't get much of a sense of pretense about the proceedings, so maybe they do wrassle cattle and live in double wides after all. Just skip the "traditional" ditties.

Also from Crucial Blast is the latest release from the UK's long-standing high priest to the altar of feedback, SKULLFLOWER, with *Tribulation*. SKULLFLOWER is Matt Bower, who's been making noise in one form or another (TOTAL, SUNROOF! and a dozen other projects) since 1982. In that time, he's perfected the art of making soundscapes out of white noise, feedback and sparse amounts of low-end. *Tribulation* is over an hour's worth of such noisy ambience. The tracks seem to get progressively more "musical" as the album proceeds, though these shifts are on a geological time scale, with minor twirps and scrapes filtering in gradually, forming a harsh, abrasive, yet composed noise assault. There's definitely purpose to it all — on most tracks anyway — and if you've got the patience and the eardrums for it, there're some transcendental frequencies to be found here.

Also on the ambient drone tip is a pair of releases from former bassist of CREATION IS CRUCIFIXION, Nathan Berlinguette. 5/5/2000 is a two-man collaboration with Travis from CATTLE DECAPITATION, and *Reflektionen Musique*, (Post Replica, www.postreplica.com) is a collection of rediscovered recordings from a few years back. 5/5/2000 has an impressive range of sounds, all of which focus on long, hypnotic drones, from quiet atmospheric washes to dense reverberating collages of noise loops. Three tracks in 37 minutes, inducing the sort of head rush you get as you try to sleep after a day riding on roller-coasters. M. KOURIE meanwhile, is Berlinguette's solo project and is a far more restrained affair. *The Dreams of…* (Chrome Peeler, www.chromepeeler.com) is one of the more pleasant soundtracks to a session of just you, your bathtub, and a straight razor to the wrist; this is really pretty stuff, in the sort of understated, near subliminal delivery to which my over-used terms ambient, droning, and atmospheric could never do justice.

Getting back to the metal, San Francisco gets back to its '80s thrash roots with the advent of a seriously crushing outfit, SAROS. This is turning out to be the column of groups with 10-minute songs, and while that may not be so special for drone and doom bands, it's a different story for bands composing massive tracks of a dozen riffs apiece as SAROS does on their debut full-length, *Five Pointed Tongue* (Hungry Eye, www.hungryeyerecords.com). The five tracks go through a gauntlet of changes, all the while with a great classic thrashing guitar sound, so prone to headbanging as to be a driving hazard. Plus drummer Blood Eagle did time in San Francisco cult black metallers WEAKLING, so you know the double kick is solid.

In the demo department, HUMANICIDE is a new group from the currently fertile Houston scene, presenting seven tracks of their self-described "shutthefuckupcore." Their sound is an odd one to place — primarily crusty Scandinavian-style riffs, though with a way heavier guitar sound than usual, right up there with the meanest grind. Plus the multiple high and low vocals make it

sound like the guys from MORSER and MUNICIPAL WASTE are trading off. Throw in a few straight-up grind blasts and you've got a unique amalgam of all the best hardcore styles. Only contact info: myspace.com/fuck-inhumanicide.

Next up, another entry from the local West Bay scene — GO LIKE THIS's new recording of their own self-proclaimed, "Vatos Lokos Eastsidaz Honky Tonk Grind" is eight tracks of the sort of sample-ridden metallic hardcore brutality we've come to expect from former members of PLUTOCRACY, NO LESS, and KALMEX AND THE RIFFMERCHANTS. Bizarre bass leads, sinuous thrash riffs, time changes all over the place and drug-fueled vocal insanity keep things unpredictably crushing. Another entry of classic West Bay intensity as ugly and severe as the worst withdrawal shakes.

Got a slew of 7"s in here recently. Me ol' pals at Bacon Towne Records (www.upthefuckingpigs.com) sent over their latest release, GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT's *Ronald McVomit's 14 Song Happy Meal*. My deluxe edition came with a silk-screened vellum cover and a nifty GNP coloring book for the kids, but aside from these niceties, the music on this disc is plenty nice as well — older than old school 80's hardcore at speedy thrashing tempos. The vocals are the selling point of this Florida group (with Bob Suren of Sound Idea Distro on bass) — distinct female vocals singing catchy hummable tunes denouncing everything from taxes to TV to "Taco Bells in Mexico."

Seattle's PLAYING ENEMY has a new two-song 7" entitled *John Q Russia* (Ammonia, www.ammoniarecords.com) and no, no one cares. I don't think these guys ever lived up to their one "drummer of RORSCHACH" claim to fame and unfortunately not much about this or their lackluster live show here in SF last month does much to convince me otherwise. The A-side sounds more like KISS IT GOODBYE, though with a similar lack of interesting riffs or vocals, despite the airtight rhythm section. "The Priestcop" on the flipside though is actually one of the better tracks I've heard in a while — the fully electronic track, with synthesizers doing the riffs and a drum machine doing the beats, suits their style perfectly — kinda like the "Cide Projekt" tracks on the last DISCORDANCE AXIS album. If this were how they sounded all the time, I'd be much more into them.

Another oddball 7" comes from L.A.'s BAD DUDES (Project Infinity Records), another entry in the band-camp nerd-out world of math rock. These two all-too-brief tracks comprise my most-played record at home for the last month, their sub-two-minute lengths producing maddeningly frequent trips to the turntable to flip the record. This stuff is so catchy it's ridiculous — no small feat for instrumental math rock. Their version of the KINKS' "King Kong" is the best thing ever.

Finally getting to straight up grind, definitely don't miss the split 7" from Canada's MASS GRAVE and Houston's long-running PRETTY LITTLE FLOWER (Endless Sprawl Records, #106-1450 E. 7th Ave, Vancouver BC, V5N 1R8, CANADA). MASS GRAVE kick out five tracks of no-frills grind, sounding like EXCRUCIATING TERROR or PHOBIA with classic grind riffs and ripping impossible-to-understand vocals. Great lyrics about punk rock reunion tours too on "Mid Life Crisis." P.L.F. meanwhile deliver five tracks of their own plus an UNSEEN TERROR cover. Their stuff is as heavy, tight and fast as ever, and I love the lyrics to "Drowning in Stress," something I can definitely identify with these days. Great stuff from both bands- these guys are the real deal, if the logos and layout on the gatefold cover don't clue you in already.

Also required listening for grind fiends, Haunted Hotel Records (www.hauntedhotelrecords.com) just released the vinyl reissue of CRIPPLE BASTARDS' classic first LP, *Your Lies in Check*, originally released in '96 on E.U. '91 and Ecocentric Records. Haunted Hotel and Giulio and crew did a great job on this — new artwork, splatter vinyl, double panel insert, lyrics and great sound. If, like me, you missed this the first time around, don't miss it again — 69 tracks from one of the most prevocational, unpredictable and blistering grind bands ever, here at their early rawest and craziest.

Finally, a couple killer releases from the newly formed Wajlemac label (www.wajlemac.com). First, the *Some Secret* split LP from two of Japan's loudest and noisiest, CHARM and U.G. MAN. CHARM, featuring the former drummer of ASSFORT, is just a non-stop ball of seething raging speed and chaos, all drenched in blown-out noise, feedback and weird changes and fills. U.G. MAN is just slightly more straight-forward, with more understandable vocals (except for the Japanese thing) and catchier riffs.

And then out of the ashes of WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? comes the new 7" from CONQUEST FOR DEATH. Take three of the four members of WHN, add a second guitar player (Alex from SAY BOK GWAI) and the drummer from CHARM, and you get, well, a beefed-up, faster WHN. The extra guitar allows for added heaviness and added solos, while Kiku keeps things at blasting tempos throughout. Devon's vocals and particularly his lyrics remain as insightful and powerful as always. Plus their live show, after a whopping total of three practices ever, was devastating. Great to see 'em back in form.

Well, I had a few more records to review, like the new ASSHOLE PARADE, MASTODON and XASTHUR releases, but the A-HOLE PARADE I haven't listened to enough, the MASTODON's on a major and the XASTHUR just kinda sucks, so maybe it's for the best anyway. It's getting late and this column's already way too long. Maybe I'm just trying to drag out the writing process so the column won't finally be finished. The tears are hitting the keys and they'll mess up my computer if I keep this up. So anyhow, thanks again to everyone who's been in touch the last two years for making this column fun to do. Sorry I wrote about drummers so much. Keep it brutal.

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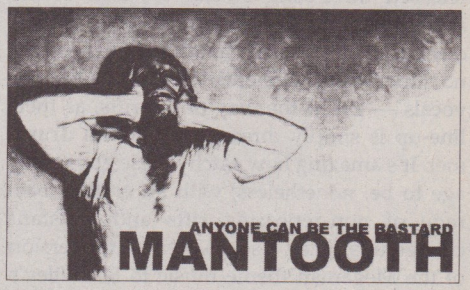


The few of you that actually still buy *MRR* every month and take the time to read my column may have noticed that I rarely, if ever, talk about music. Aside from last month's longwinded and exaggerated review of *one* Agathocles song, I try to steer clear of any semblance of a "music column," if only because half of the columns in this rag are just that. It's not so much a desire to be some kind of über-hip contrarian, but I am actually terrible at rendering the experience of listening to a record into the written form. Does this make me a poor writer and, thus, an unqualified employee of such an esteemed *music* fanzine? Probably.

On that note, I think a change of pace is in order this month. I'm not going to waste your time and write about the hottest new slab of vinyl to hit my turntable because, quite frankly, there haven't been that many hot new slabs slapping down on my punk-listening device. I'll level with you; I'm fairly bored with the majority of releases coming out these days. Quite frankly, I think the resurgence in I-Can't-Believe-It's-Not-1982 hardcore/punk is fairly trite and yawn-inspiring. But aren't most "resurgences?" I'm well aware that it's worth it to dig through the crap to find the gems, but recently I haven't had much motivation to wade through steaming piles of teen angst written by men in their mid-to-late 20s.

In the first issue of *Short, Fast, and Loud*, Chris Dodge challenged contributors to only listen to records released in the past six months. It could have been more, it could have been less; I'm in no mood to go digging through boxes of zines to find the exact number. I believe Ken Sanderson was the only one

who 'fessed up to losing the challenge, citing that sometimes you can't help but *not* listen to Roy Orbison. If issued the same challenge today, I would be in sorry shape. These are a few bands and records that would be responsible.

Gob - "The Kill Yourself Commandment" (Satan's Pimp Records, 1999) - Probably one of my favorite records to come out in the past ten years, both musically and visually. I always thought Gob were OK up to this point. I liked their split with Spazz and various "Accidental Death through..." compilation appearances, but I wasn't prepared for this LP. It's one of the reasons why I really can't get into many of these recent bands that fancy themselves as *totally sick and demented.* Not that I would ever use such flowery adjectives to describe this record. The whole time I'm listening to this, it seems like there's something writhing underneath the music. It makes me uncomfortable and sometimes gives me a headache. It features Jon Kortland of Iron Lung, whose first LP on 625 contains moments eerily similar to Gob.

Toadliquor - "s/t" (Soledad, 1993) - Yeah, I know their discography came out on Southern Lord, but even so, it doesn't seem like anyone gives a shit about this band or this record. Over the winter, between two jobs, I was averaging about a 70-hour workweek. I taped this record and listened to it pretty much exclusively between November and February. It's the perfect soundtrack to your spirit breaking. If I had a scale to measure the intense urge to use clichés, said scale would probably be *brutally crushed* under the *sheer density* of this *terrifying* album.

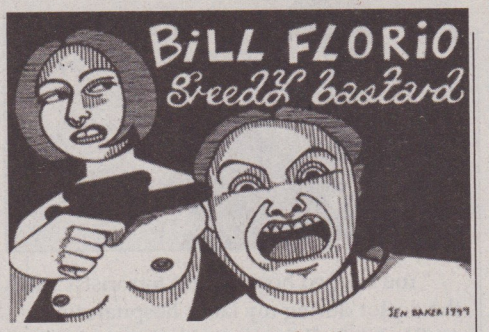
Wadge - drum machine grind done by one guy out of Canada by the name of Paul Pfeiffer. I don't have much interest in drum machine grind outside of this guy and Wadge destroys all in the genre and most bands in the grindcore arena. The songs are interesting, almost bordering on catchy, and he doesn't use the drum machine like he just got it for Christmas and thinks one billion snare hits per second sounds totally awesome.

Showcase Showdown - I've mentioned them before as the best band to come out of Boston in the last 20 years. Hyperbole aside, Showcase Showdown was one of my favorites growing up and their EPs are still some of my favorite records. I think a lot of people are quick to shun them because they were lumped in with Blanks 77 and the like (all of which, comparatively, have *not* aged so well). My favorites are their split 7" with August Spies, *Merry Christmas* EP, *Chickens* EP, split 8" with the Twerps, and *Appetite of Kings* LP. Catchy, fast, snotty. Their last LP is a lot more polished than their previous material, but good nonetheless.

Hellnation - Dynamite Up Your Ass, Cheerleaders For Imperialism, and *Fucked Up Mess* are all perfect albums.

I'm done.

Email me: gregory.man tooth@gmail.com



I seem to always use this family-event scenario to display my view of the world outside of punk rock. This is probably a good thing, in my case, because my other major window to the world of regular-thinking people is work. Work consists of Jewish mothers whose foul offspring is having some wedding or bar mitzvah. I think if some alien Lewis and Clark showed up to check out Earth and the first thing they saw was some yenta meeting with my boss about their photos or their payment of the balance on their video contract — between gossip, egotism, self-loathing, sales tax rates, and who has cancer in the family — we'd see a UFO heading directly for the sun. Anyhow let's go to my cousins and aunts on Mother's Day — it's a much healthier outlook on the human race. Wow, that's pretty sad.

I was thinking about the roots of mediocrity today. It seems that in the outside world of my cousins and aunts, an artistic entity is worthwhile because it's available to them — like a Disney cartoon feature. If someone was willing to put up mass capital to make it available to lazy-ass couch potatoes such as themselves, there must be all sorts of expert quality control put on it, so it has to be good. Also, the artists behind this song, film, or newspaper column are paid professionals, so they must not only be great at what they do, but highly respected in their communities.

Now, I'm not about to imply that this zine disproves any of those inferences, but the fact that you and I are reading it is what should make the above paragraph seem like something only really stupid people would assume. The thing is, most of the members of my family are not stupid people at all. In fact, most of them really aren't lazy — some of them even have some specialized interest in something somewhat cultural, that you would actually need to seek out outside of the mass media world. Hmm. Well, what I'm getting at is the difference between popular culture and subculture and what links the two besides odd stares at backyard barbeques. The question is, why has mass media been so watered down and why do couch-potatoey people buy it?

First of all, if you're gonna "get into" something, no matter what you want to call it, you basically have to study it. I mean, yeah I can buy the MISFITS box set, and some MISFITS t-shirts. I can wear those products of the entity called THE MISFITS, but does that really make me a fan? Fan is short for "fanatic." I could go see THE MISFITS in their current trademark-granted-bycourt-order-marky-got-a-new-wig-for-it-then-was-replaced live-show incarnation. Without knowing the history behind all this though, is there anything really special about it? Someone who decides to say get a MISFITS tattoo, for instance, are they doing it because "Die Die My Darling" is fun to sing in the shower? Or because ... well, wait ... people get MISFITS tattoos? Why? OK, skip this example — this can probably be a whole other column, and actually issuing some sort of IQ/personality tests to people with Misfits tattoos would probably make a great zine article in itself.

What I'm trying to say is, is someone gonna get into, say, AFI in the same way? Is there really something interesting there? Does someone over the age of 16 actually not feel embarrassed wearing an AFI t-shirt? Someone who's really into punk rock, are they really gonna get excited when REEL BIG FISH play in their town? Someone more wienery than me writing for this zine would probably say it has something to do with these bands not being do-it-yourself. Well, I dunno if that's a good argument either. No one's getting excited about seeing ANGRY SAMOANS in their current incarnation and I don't think we can blame corporate task assignment or lack of do-it-yourself ethic for that. I think a new word should be assigned to whatever people like to call DIY. It should have something to do more with unpretentiousness and honesty rather than just be associated with sloppily hand-screened record covers with fingerprints and boogers stuck to 'em. When I had that whole Against Me! column thing a couple of years ago, what really made me decide that these guys really were full of it was when I talked to them on the phone and explained this very thing. I told them, "What would any band be without good drama to back it up? You should thank me for making your band seem a little less boring than you are." Anyhow they didn't understand and that probably has a lot to do with them being on Warner Brothers now instead of in your record collection. They just didn't get what makes good punk rock good punk rock. There's nothing more to it — you can't squeeze the rock any more without it turning to dust. They're really nothing special to them, they put out a good line of bullshit and people who weren't 15 bought it for a while and they suddenly thought, hey, we can sell a watered-down line of bullshit to 12-year-olds now and get some money, too! Wheee!

Just a quick note. I went to see Chuck D of

Public Enemy speak at a college orientation at a rich snob school on Friday. He went on about things exactly like this for about four hours, of course applying it to being black and being into rap music, but it pretty much still applied. There's only, say, 100,000 people in the U.S. who are actually into rap — the scene, if you will. Now how do you think G-Unit sells five million CDs? The only block of five million consumers out there are 12 to 19-year-old white kids. What are the chances of your music in its un-washed-out form appealing to this group? There isn't any. You have to compromise everything you do to sell yourself and your music to kids whose whole lives revolve around Grand Theft Auto and mac 'n' cheese. If you apply the same theory to punk rock, there's probably something like 50,000 people into punk rock in the U.S. Pressed 500 7"s? Better hope they like it in Europe!

If you have a good band and put on a good show, chances are that the small punk population is gonna notice you within a couple of years. You play decent shows with other decent bands, chances are people are gonna show up. This covers quality control.

The other thing is talent. The truth is, a good song is probably not gonna be hurt as much as you think by some lack of timing tone or sound quality. If you take anyone who's into punk rock and nitpick at their favorite records or favorite shows of all time, seven out of the ten will have something to do with someone's basement. Getting a lot of advance money to sit in a recording studio and try to squeeze an album out of your ass never will produce the type of (insert word I was looking for to replace DIY above) sincere good-songitude that working all night at a porn DVD rental place and showing up the next day to band practice with a new song you came up with after dealing with a nasty dude in a trench coat will. On the other hand, the band that consists of pot-smoking kids with parents that pay their rent as they work 12 hours a week and play video games aren't gonna be producing anything interesting either.

Here's the big ending: real people are going to relate to real music. A 15-year-old kid who's not allowed out of his house is gonna feel right at home with some band that got signed to a major label because that band exists only as a product to be sold to this large segment of the spending public. The fact that this is the only market that pays off so well is why most of the readily available entertainment has been brought down to this low level, and in turn, that's why your family are all bores. The best thing you can do about it is not buy into it and promote your own behavior in a positive way. Set yourself up as a good example and perhaps a few of these dolts will follow your lead once they turn 19 or 20.

You can't stop a 15-year-old kid from being a retard, but there's no excuse for you or I to walk around wearing hockey helmets either.

bill@candids.com

"You learned how to fight terrorists?" asks the doctor during my latest hospital stint.

"Yeah," I tell the guy with that scope thing around his neck that he listens to my heart with, and feels like ice against my skin.

"Why?" he asks as he jabs a needle into my IV line. Suddenly I feel a hell of a lot better.

"Video games," is all I can manage to say as I feel that morphine train run me over, crushing my body and making it feel so fucking good.

If I'd known what was to come the following September 11th, I think I would have joined the army right away. Hindsight is always 20/20.

But on morphine, it's like infinity, man.

Punk rock.

***

"How ya doin', Green?" asked my cell captain, as I stood in the Arizona desert wearing a green ski-mask, an army jacket, protective head-gear with goggles, black ladies stretch jeans, and an old pair of sneakers now entirely covered with sharp thorns.

"Hot as shit, Red," I said back to the head of my cell unit, as the ninety-plus degree weather baked my brains out, "and also pretty fucking miserable."

No one had told me that there were things called "fire ants" in these hills of sand and bush. And no one had told me that they bit. Hard.

"Well," says Red, "Hang in there, and watch out for the ants. They bite."

"Thanks," I mumbled, as I brushed off the nasty little fuckers with the loaded M-16 I carried just like my guitar in my hands.

As the minutes clicked by, I became more and more cranky. Not only were the ant bites beginning to swell, the thorns were making my feet hurt and the heat and dust had triggered an asthma attack. And I didn't have my Woofer.

"How ya doin', Green?" asked Red again a few minutes later, as we patrolled our assigned area of the top-secret military base.

"Bored," I told him, as I looked over the miles and miles of empty desert, wondering if there were snakes or scorpions waiting to kill me.

"Well, hang in there," said my cell captain, "we should see some action soon."

"Cool," I lied.

Actually, I didn't wanna see any action.

Being in a terrorist cell unit with "Red" and "Blue" was bad enough. Having someone from the SWAT team actually shooting at me would suck. I'd picked the bush for a reason. To hide. I could have been a sniper on a rooftop. Or been a hostage guard. Or even a door patrol guy. But they were all easy targets. With the twigs and leaves sticking out of my mask's headband, I was hard to see. And liked it that way.

I just didn't like the heat. And the ants.

Suddenly, to my left, I saw something move on the desert floor. I watched the object intently to see if it would move again. I had already almost opened fire on two trash bags, an old oil can, and a sock.

It did move. Again.

So, with all the nerve I had in my body, I rushed toward the thing and began to fire my rifle at it, yelling "Die motherfucker!"

It stood up. All six-feet, four inches of it. And returned fire.

As I heard ammo whiz past my head, all I could think was that I had to kill him before he killed me.

I ran faster and faster toward him, pulling the trigger as fast as I could. Our Special Forces trainer, Nick, had told us in these situations it was best to keep moving and firing. In order to stay alive.

But what he didn't tell us was that it was important to wear belts.

Because as I was running and gunning, my ladies stretch jeans began to slip below my waist, exposing my underwear, and those vile little bugs crawling on my legs. And all I could think was that I was gonna die like this—with my pants near my knees, thorns piercing my feet, and insects approaching my balls.

In the Arizona desert.

They'd have to put "Pussy" on my gravestone.

***

It had all started a few weeks earlier with a mysterious message on my answering machine.

"Hello," said a mechanical voice, "you are needed for a top-secret mission in the Arizona desert. You will be contacted soon with information regarding travel. Keep your ears open and your mouth shut."

When I played the message for Wendy, she was as confused as I was. For about a minute. Then she told me it was probably 989 Studios calling to fly me to God-Knows-Where, put me up in a fancy hotel, give me lots of free food and gifts, and have me do God-Knows-What.

The last time the PlayStation video game company had called, I ended up driving in a Demolition Derby. This time, who knew?

"You better not be jumping out of any

planes," said Wendy, after we discussed what the "event" might be this time.

"Why not?" I whined.

"Because it's dangerous and you could be killed, and then PJ would be an orphan. Plus, I don't know how to set the VCR," she joked.

"What if we are bungie jumping?" I asked.

"Same thing," she replied.

A few days passed by, and I got a call from 989 Studios, the makers of Syphon Filter, the most kick-ass spy game for the console, asking if I was coming to the desert.

"What's the event?" I asked, wondering how the hell they would top the last one. Would they buy me a plane?

"It's top secret, George," explained Kristina, who I understand was a little bit perturbed at me for writing that her breasts were *too large* in my article about their last "event."

"Can't you give me a hint, babe?" I asked my Californian friend.

"It will be rad," she said, "and we'll also show you our newest project, which is top secret as well."

"Can Wendy and my Yorkshire Terrier PJ come with me this time?" I asked her.

When I just got one round-trip ticket via e-mail, my question was answered.

***

My flight landed in the Cactus State with my pal Alex from *Maxim* and me, zonked out on Clonopin. I had given him some of my anti-anxiety drug because he seemed, well, anxious. A few minutes after taking it, he was out like a light. A few minutes after I took mine, I was out, too.

After dragging our shit through the airport, we found the limo guy who was to take us to our hotel. It wasn't hard. He had our names on a sign he held up.

"You guys are here for 989," said the guy, as he carried our bags to the car, "right?"

We told him we were as he took us to the longest stretch limo I have ever seen.

"This car is for us?" I asked, in utter amazement.

"Just you two," said the driver guy, as he put our bags in a trunk the size of my bathroom and opened the car door which lead into the back of a limo larger than my apartment.

On the way to our hotel, I opened the sky roof and rode around like one of those high school prom idiots, while Alex fucked around with the two televisions, a loud stereo system, and wet bar.

After arriving at our hotel, which was actually a resort with a golf course, two swimming pools, and the whole nine yards, we met up for drinks with people from 989, then went to bed. We still didn't know what "the event" was the next day, but we did know that we were to wear the 989 army jackets that were in our hotel rooms, as well as the Dickies steel-toed boots, which were all left with a note reading "There are many things you must accomplish during your stay. Your mission objectives will be revealed in due time," and "Trust no one."

The next morning I tried on the boots before breakfast, and decided I didn't trust anyone. The things were supposed to be a size eleven, but felt like a size thirteen. My feet swam in them. So I wore some old Nikes.

I arrived at breakfast and met a nice guy named Ron who was dressed in full army gear. I mean, the hat, the vest, the pants, the boots, everything. He asked me how I thought he looked.

"Great," I told him, and then asked him why he was so dressed up.

"I'm covering this event for The E! Entertainment Network," he told me.

I asked him for which show.

"*The Gossip Show*," he explained.

I knew I'd recognized him. He was the guy who always talked about what hot chick was fucking who. Cool.

About an hour later, we all found ourselves in a hotel conference room, learning secret details about an upcoming game that I'm not allowed to mention yet. Oh well.

Then we went off into the desert. Punk Rock.

***

As our bus full of 989 employees and assorted journalists pulled onto the secret military base in the middle of the Arizona desert, we were asked to sign waivers which basically said that if we died, 989 wasn't responsible.

This was gonna be fun.

After we got off the bus, we were met by two older guys in army suits who told us that this location was top secret and we couldn't give it out to anyone. They also told us that the base was active and that some "experimental aircraft" was produced here.

Putting two and two together, I began to understand why folks in the Cactus State always saw "funny lights" in the sky.

We were then told the reason we were there.

SWAT training.

The old guys explained that we were on a base where SWAT teams from around the world came to train. That over 130 units had trained on this base alone. That one of the our teacher guys was still active with "Special Forces," and that what we would learn today was absolutely real.

Then they asked if any of us had ever used a paint-ball gun before.

A few people raised their hands.

"Good," one of the old guys said, "then you know if you get hit by these suckers, they can really hurt you."

"Great," I moaned to Alex as we stood there in the morning desert heat.

"Uh-huh," replied Alex.

Next, the 43 or so of us there were split into two different groups. One group was a team of about thirty, the other, thirteen.

I was with the lucky thirteen.

We were then told to go to separate training buildings where we would learn SWAT techniques.

As I followed Alex to our building, I imagined myself as a rough and tough Dana Andrews—that guy who used to star on the television show *SWAT*. I imagined how I'd run around buildings, break down doors, and shoot bad guys. All while that silly theme song ran through my head. "Da, na-na-na, na-na-na, na-na-na-na-na-na!"

After arriving in our "classroom," which was a bunker with seats, my illusions were shattered.

"You guys ain't gonna be SWAT," said Nick, our team supervisor, "You're gonna be terrorists."

We all went into shock.

"That's right," explained Nick, in his camouflage army suit, "the other team is, at this moment, learning SWAT techniques. And they think you guys are learning the same. But I'm gonna teach you guys how to break down doors, take hostages, and learn the truth about negotiations."

With that, Nick explained to us some of his history. Enough to scare the living shit out of us.

It turns out he was in the Special Forces unit of the military. In fact, that he still is. That he goes down to South America as a security consultant on a regular basis to teach corporations how to protect themselves from kidnappers and other terrorists. That his friend was almost killed. Almost received "the coup de grace," a shot to the head, but the rifle jammed.

He also explained that we had to break up into smaller groups called "cells," so that we really didn't know what the other "cells" were doing if we were caught and tortured. That paint-balls fly at 200 feet per second, and will make us bleed. That we are to take commands from our cell leaders, and, most of all, to have fun.

Then he gave us our guns.

Most people took rifles *and* pistols, but I just wanted a rifle. A rapid-fire rifle. The pistols were supposed to be used for "up-close" fighting, which I had no intention of doing. Not at 200 feet per second, thank you very much.

After I got my rifle and loaded it with paint-balls, I got a feel for the thing. It was thick, long, heavy, and felt good in my hands. Better than a guitar, but not as good as my wienerschnitzel.

Then I got to practice firing it, as we were all issued ski-masks, face-masks with goggles, and names. I was "Green," because that was the color of my hat.

The other two guys in my cell were "Red" and "Blue." "Red," because the guy had red hair, and "Blue," cause, well, I dunno. But I understand that he is a designer of video games, so maybe it has something to do with the amount of time he spends in front of a computer compared to the amount of time his balls spend getting some action.

Anyway, after a few practice shots, I found myself getting pretty good with my gun. In fact, so good, I walked around with a Tony Montana accent saying "Make room for the bad guy!" a zillion times.

Finally Special Forces Nick told me to "zip it."

We then were taught how to take a hostage. How to break into a room, create confusion, grab the intended victim, and get out. All in under twenty seconds.

The method Nick taught us was called "The SAS Choo-Choo." "Choo-Choo" as in train. We were to all bust into the other building in a line formation and grab our "hostage" (actually, a 989 employee). We were to use the back and side doors, to yell and scream a lot, to fire into the ceiling, and to create pandemonium.

"If this was a real situation," explained Nick, "you'd shoot anybody who didn't immediately get down on the floor, or whoever looks at you. You'd cap their ass. Remember, you don't want witnesses."

Then he told us about clean-up crews. Guys who stayed outside, and "cleaned-up" anyone who really saw anything. He explained to us if we were ever bystanders in a real situation like the one we were gonna try to pull off, that we should not "rubberneck." That we should do as the terrorist says, lay on the floor, and *don't look*. That terrorists are usually pros, trained by ex-military guys who were like in the KGB and shit, and they know what they're doing.

Nick then taught us that there is no money in "a dead hostage," and how it takes about three guys to take care of one victim. How the hostage should be kept healthy, and if we were to cut off any body part, to mail it on ice, so that the part can be re-attached later. That only amateurs let their hostages die.

We then heard some stories about kids wandering around in South America who are missing fingers, ears, and the like.

Wonderful.

Then we practiced.

Then we went and took our hostage.

I was the first guy through the back door as we staged our raid, the locomotive of the "Choo-Choo." As I ran into the other classroom full of 989 people and journalists, I yelled "Everyone down on the floor, everyone down!"

We all began shooting at the ceiling with our ski-masks on, as another cell grabbed the hostage and fled. As this was going on, I kept yelling and firing at the ceiling. While I thought I was yelling "Everyone Down!" over and over, it turns out I was saying "Get down you motherfucking pussies!"

I was told this by a smiling journalist from *Good Morning America*, who said she'd have to bleep that out. I was also told we pulled off our entire kidnapping in under 14 seconds.

***

After lunch the real fun began. We had taken our hostage, and were now to protect him from the impending SWAT raid. I asked Nick who was supposed to win, and he told me "The SWAT team."

It was then I felt like one of those red-shirted guys on Star Trek. Or one of those faceless guys working for Ernesto Blofield in some volcano or on some island. Captain Kirk, Mr. Spock, and James Bond always survived. But the bad guys? Dog meat.

And that's what I was. I was born to die. Born to be a faceless terrorist killed by Dana Andrews and his team, while the theme to SWAT played. "Da, na-na-na, na-na-na, na-na-na-na-na-na!"

Blow-job.

I told Nick I would do my best, and die with honor. But I had other plans. And they didn't include the grim-reaper. And 200 feet per second paint balls. They involved the desert. And the bush. And me hiding in it.

And so it was more than luck that my cell ended up "guarding the perimeter," as the "hostage" was held in a military base house. I volunteered us for the job. Much to my cell's dismay.

The first hour or two in the sand and heat weren't so bad. Sure dust and sand went up my nose, and my throat was as dry as an AA member, but I was safe. I heard some shooting over by the army housing, but it wasn't anywhere near me. I was at least 100 meters out in the sand. Looking for those who would try to take us out from behind.

Yeah, right.

All that was behind us was sand. And more sand. And some shrubbery. And cactuses. Lots of them.

So I felt okay.

As the afternoon wore on, I watched some firefights from afar. I saw as terrorists fired at approaching SWAT team guys. I watched as SWAT team guys fired at terrorists. They were all yelling and having fun. But when one of them would get hit, they'd yelp in pain.

Yes-siree, I liked it just fine where I was.

That was until I thought I saw something move.

I was standing—well, crouching—in some bushes, watching one of the 989 PR girls walk by, and wondering if I could nail her in her fine ass with my rifle.

As I was doing so, I saw a flicker out of my left eye. I turned my head around and looked through my goggles, and the twigs covering my face, to see a black thing move.

My heart leapt into my mouth.

Someone had penetrated our perimeter, and was gonna take me out.

I aimed my gun at the black thing, and waited for it to move again.

It did.

First backwards, then forwards. Then sideways.

As I was ready to fire, I realized it was a plastic bag, and took my finger off the trigger.

Phew.

I didn't want to give my location up to those SWAT guys. Then they might actually try and shoot me.

Time marched on, as my cell heard more and more firing near the military base. I think they were pissed at me for choosing the pussy way out, because the first time Red asked how I was doing, I heard a bit of anger in his voice.

The second time he asked is when he told me about the ants. But it was already too late. Those little red fuckers were crawling all over my legs, biting the shit out of me. I shoulda known that stepping on little piles of sand with holes on top could have some serious consequences. But I was so busy sneaking around trying not to be seen by 200 feet per second paint balls, I wasn't thinking straight.

I also wasn't thinking straight about all those bushes with the sharp thorns. Or the cactuses. Sharp motherfucking things. That nature sure is evil.

So, there I was, in the middle of the Arizona desert, on a top secret military base, with a gun in my hand, and stretch jeans on my legs, fire ants biting me, having an asthma attack, when I saw another figure move that wasn't a bag, rock, or sock. Or cell-mate.

It was a person.

A SWAT person.

With a 200 feet per second paint ball gun clutched tightly in his hands.

I rushed toward the six-foot-four-inch guy screaming as loud as I could.

"Motherfucker, make room for the bad guy!" I yelled as I pulled the trigger on my rifle as fast as I could.

My heart was beating at one million beats per second, and as his return fire whizzed past my head, I cursed even louder.

"You fucking pussy, I'm gonna waste your pansy-ass you motherfucking fuck!" I yelled.

As I was doing this, I somehow managed to step out of my body and watch the whole thing. There I was, a normally peaceful sort of guy, yelling and screaming and shooting at someone. If only those draft guys who yelled at me for writing the words "conscientious objector" on my draft registration card could see me now.

I kept firing and yelling, and eventually hit my target. Then I hit him again, again, again, again, and again.

"Enough," yelled the guy who I think works for *CBS News Path*, "You shot me enough."

"Are you fucking dead?" I yelled, as I kept my gun trained on his head with one arm, and used the other to pull up my pants and also to check and see if my wallet was still in my rear pocket.

"You got me," he said, depressed and in pain, "those damn things hurt."

"So you're dead?" I asked again.

"Yes," he replied.

"So if I turn around, you're not going to shoot me?"

"That's right," he answered.

But I didn't trust him. So I backed away from him, slowly, with my gun aimed at him the whole time. There was no way in hell he was gonna shoot me in the back.

Eventually he walked out of my sight, and I backed into a small cactus which pricked the fuck out of my leg.

Nature.

***

After our second food and drink break, I returned to the desert with Alex as a new member of my cell. I told him that is was real fun running around in the desert and that he'd love it. He told me he had been on the roof earlier, and had sniped quite a few people. But that he was afraid of getting hit by a paintball, because he heard they really hurt.

I told him the desert was the perfect place for him.

But I didn't tell him about the ants.

Or plants.

Time ticked by as Alex and I and some chick hid in the bushes, waiting for what was supposed to be the final attack. The big one. The battle to end all battles.

The one where the SWAT guys break into the guarded house, shoot the terrorists, and save the hostage.

But, of course, my plans were different. The way I figured it was once they rushed the house, I'd just pick them off like ducks. Or geese.

And it almost worked.

The SWAT team ran up to the house and prepared themselves to enter with the "SAS Choo-Choo." As they did so, I just picked them off, one by one. So did Alex and the chick.

Eventually, they saw us and started shooting at us, but not before we hit everyone of them. I swear.

But that didn't stop them from shooting at us all the more. I kept yelling that they were supposed to be dead, but they just laughed. Cheaters.

Moments later, I complained to Nick, our Special Forces Commander, that I killed all of those motherfuckers, and they were still gonna enter the house.

"Well, go in and defend your unit," he yelled at me, "get in there and waste the guys coming in the front door."

"Me alone?" I asked.

"You seem to be the only guy left with ammo. Get in there," he screamed.

So I did. I ran into the house with my mask, hat, ladies stretch jeans, thorny sneakers and socks, and searched for the kitchen.

When I found it, I also found the SWAT team kicking down the front door as glass began to shatter from paint-balls going through windows at 200 feet per second.

"Holy fuck," I yelled.

"Freeze," yelled the captain of the SWAT team, who, as it turns out, was Ron from *The Gossip Show*. I could tell it was him behind those goggles because of the green hat, green vest, and green pants he told me he purchased for two bucks in Compton.

I looked at him, and behind him at his whole posse. There were at least five guys. With five guns. With paint-balls that traveled at 200 feet per second. And I was only about three feet away. So I knew what I had to do.

And I did it.

"Fuck you motherfuckers," I yelled and started firing at their faces.

***

About an hour later, we all found ourselves near the bus, nursing our wounds. Tom, from Wenner Media, had welts all over his stomach and chest.

Kristina, from 989, had welts on her arms and shoulders, and bloody hands.

Ron Dovin from The E! Network had a huge bloody welt on his upper arm.

And others had various welts and bloodied hands as well.

But in the end, I think I got it the worst.

I mean that.

Literally.

My underwear got all bloody and I haven't been able to sit comfortably for a week.

My butt now has a third cheek.

So now, when I'm asked, "Hey George, what's it really like to be a terrorist?" I can tell them.

"It's a pain in the ass."

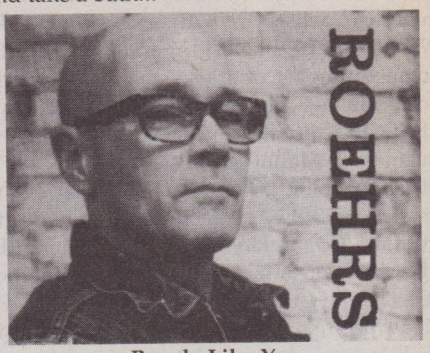
Take my life, please.

Endnotes:

1. Great new CDs I got this month include ones from the inside of Carbon 14, a great zine, the new one from Some Action, The Rydells latest, one from Professor Murder, and the new one from Hidden World. Oh yeah, and the more I listen to The Threads and The Bullits, the more I think they could be the next huge bands. Next to Paul Ryder, of course.

2. www.myspace.com/helpgeorgetabb

3. People from around the world are helping me through this illness on I got from the effects of September 11th. I can't say "thank you" and "bless you" enough. I love you all. I feel so good about humanity I beginning to think I'm a hippie. Quick! I better cut my hair and take a bath!!!



People Like You

Look out punk! Scotty and his Tank Crimes Records in conjunction with No Way Records have opened the floodgates leading to the thrash beast!

Just when you thought it was safe to go back outside you get pulverized by the new STRUNG UP/DIRECT CONTROL split LP. STRUNG UP steps up to the plate for round one and fucking destroys your little world! This is hardcore as it was meant to be played! No holds barred! No prisoners taken!

STRUNG UP rip through "Pay Toll," "Oakland Violence," "Legal Dope," "No Need," "Basket Case," "No Time To Think," and " I Don't Wanna Be Here." Whew! Fucking hard-as-nails punk for you fucks! This is all consuming, be-all end-all punk with a hammer! You will not return from this journey unscathed! STRUNG UP is one of just a handful of punk bands playing this caliber of hardcore! Fucking ruthless!

Let's be perfectly honest—STRUNG UP is a hard fuckin band to follow! On side two of this split LP DIRECT CONTROL is up for the task! Brandon sings as if the devil's got a hold of his balls. His guitar is positively manic. DIRECT CONTROL storms through "Stay Blind," "Kill Me," "Police Threat," "Test Missile," "A.D.D.," "Plea for Peace," and "Give it Back." This is desperate, frenzied punk rock! DIRECT CONTROL is one of the few bands that could hold up their end of the deal on a split with STRUNG UP. Well done!

For this scorching new product, contact Tank Crimes at PO Box 3495, Oakland, CA 94609, www.tankcrimes.com or No Way Records at www.nowayrecords.com.

Fucking A! The good folks at TKO Records have cooked up an amazing double CD called *Everybody Loves ANTiSEEN—A Loving Tribute to the Boys from Brutalsville*. This compendium is absolutely bursting at the seams with hard-ass rock 'n' roll derived from ANTiSEEN's vast catalog of hits. The concept of a tribute album was conceived many years ago by Mr. Jeff Skipski while he was the head honcho at the infamous Baloney Shrapnel Records. Finally this inspiration has been committed to discs by TKO Records. This massive collection gathers fifty-seven bands covering, with

a couple of exceptions, different ANTiSEEN tracks. The *Everybody Loves ANTiSEEN* tribute includes artists as diverse as HANK WILLIAMS III, BLOWFLY, and CHAOS UK. Some examples of tracks that will change your life are Philadelphia, Pennsylvania's LIMECELL and their brutal cover of "Kill the Business," Mount Orab, Ohio's BRODY'S MILITIA doing a fast-as-fuck version of the great ANTiSEEN nugget "Ugly American" from the *Here to Ruin Your Groove* LP. HELLSTOMPER does their inimitable rendition of "Leeches and Losers." The BUMPIN UGLIES do a rip-it-up cover of the ANTiSEEN classic "Self-Induced Lobotomy," also from *Here to Ruin Your Groove*. THE FAGGOT KINGS tear a new asshole in the song "We Got This Far Without You." Fuck yes! That's just some highlights from disc one!

Disc two opens with one of the all-time favorite anthems written by ANTiSEEN, "Run My World," covered by one of the most powerful singers on planet earth! TEXAS TERRI BOMB!! Fuck! This shit is so motherfucking heavy! TEXAS TERRI BOMB takes this popular ANTiSEEN crowd pleaser and makes it her own! This lady gives off fucking rock-and-roll lightning bolts! Fuck yes! Long live TEXAS TERRI BOMB!!

Yes! You lucky fucks get two versions of the disturbing ANTiSEEN anthem "People Like You." Mr. SIMON STOKES, the revered songwriter with many years and many miles under his belt does a quiet, wistful version of "People Like You." Mr. Stokes wrenches all the emotion out of every lyric—the small hairs on the back of your neck will stand at attention! Mr. JEFF DAHL, whose resume is one of the most illustrious in all of rock-n-roll, puts a nice spin on "People Like You." Mr. Dahl chugs through the song with a momentum that would make the STOOGES take notice!

The TUNNEL RATS, those crazed rock-n-rollers from the great state of New Hampshire, the "Live Free or Die" state, turn in a boisterous cover of "Cactus Jack." The West Coast's preeminent representatives of The Confederacy of Scum, HAMMERLOCK graces this excellent CD with a whiskey soaked version of "Billy the Kid." This is mighty fine shit! Mr. Alan King, of HELLSTOMPER fame, leads his POLECAT BOOGIE REVIVAL BAND through a brilliant cover of "Ten Pounds of Shit in a Five Pound Bag." Unbelievable! Mr. King is one of American music's unsung heroes! Years from now people will realize how fortunate we were to have had HELLSTOMPER in our lives for ten years!

Hey punk! Pay attention! Those evil fucks with the unrepentant metal guitars, THE HOOKERS, are coming blasting into your house to destroy the tranquility on the *Everybody loves ANTiSEEN* tribute. THE HOOKERS contribute a blistering version of "Hammerhead!!" This double CD package has many artists from all over the earth paying respect to the mighty ANTiSEEN. Fucking amazing!!! Buy this at your first opportunity!!!

The second helping of real rock 'n' roll available this month on TKO is supplied by those notorious Clockwork-punks from Austin, Texas, the LOWER CLASS BRATS. The *New Seditionaries* LP is far and away the best material Bones, Marty, and company have committed to vinyl since the Helen of Oi! singles!

These songs are so fucking catchy, you will be singing along by the end of the first listen. Six hours later, you will still be humming along.

The LOWER CLASS BRATS lead off with "Go Insane"—a respectable song in its own right—but the fun is just beginning. The BRATS hammer you into the ground like a tent stake with a triple dose of the best melodic Oi! you are likely to hear this year or next! The title cut "New Seditionaries" is a perfectly crafted street punk anthem! "New Seditionaries" goes right into "PGL"—excellent! You don't even have a chance to catch your breath before you get clobbered with "I'm a Mess." Great!

This *New Seditionaries* LP does not ever lose the spectacular rock 'n' roll momentum! We plow through "See You Go," "Fools," "The Worst," "Cats Clause," and "Beware," arriving at a pair of songs that any punk or skinhead artist would happily count as the pinnacle of their career! "Two in the Heart" grabs you by the throat and it won't let go! This great tune segues into "Walking into the Fire," which is a frigging masterpiece! Marty and Bones should be very proud of what they have created!

For your ANTiSEEN and LOWER CLASS BRATS product, contact TKO Records, 8491 Atlanta Ave, Suite 505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646, www.tkoecords.com.

Fuck! Yannick and Lydia and their Feral Ward Records have released another punk rock fuselage on your hapless brain! This time you get clobbered by GOVERNMENT WARNING with the brutal slam of *No Moderation*. This fucker starts out fast and furious with the title cut, "No Moderation"—this shit will peel the paint off your fucking walls! The onslaught continues with "Jocks and Cops" – two vile species that hardcore youth has never liked. Song number three is "Cutting Room Floor," about the propaganda and manipulation perpetuated by the people by governments and media. We plow through "Fat Nation" and get to "Self Medication," about the dangers of trying to escape the pressures of living in this modern world with booze and pills. Yes! This is hardcore punk that gets up in your face from the first note and stays there.

The GOVERNMENT WARNING record thrashes your cerebellum from the minute the needle touches down to the last note! Get your GOVERNMENT WARNING product by contacting boss@feralwardrecords.com.

Fucking HELLSHOCK came through the San Francisco Bay Area and played a number of absolutely brilliant shows! These men play for keeps—when you have witnessed the raw power of a live HELLSHOCK show, nothing will ever be quite the same! The first show was at the Elbo Room in San Francisco but HELLSHOCK still had enough gism left to play with local favorites DEADFALL at Annie's Social Club. That night the set consisted of "Your World," "Gray City," "Masquerade," "Beauty," "Last Sunset," and "Walking Death." Fucking brutal!

The next night was at the Gilman Street Project in sunny Berkeley, California and the fucking punks went off. Men and women, young and old, all the HELLSHOCK fans were there! The Portland punks delivered quite a set! read this set list: "World Darkness," "After World," "Masquerade," "Wax Statues," "Welcome the Void," "No Dawn," and "Who's Scared?" The Saturday HELLSHOCK show was fucking mayhem! A good time was had by all! After a week playing cities down south in Bakersfield, Long Beach, and Tijuana, amongst others, HELLSHOCK returned to the Bay Area. The Sunday show at The Padded Cell in Oakland was great! Here's the set list: "Your World," "Last Sunset," "Wax Statues," "Warlord," "No Dawn," "Masquerade," and "Olympus." Fuck yes!

HELLSHOCK is one of a kind! You will not see brute power unleashed in this quantity anywhere—Portland, San Francisco, Mexico or otherwise!

Go see HELLSHOCK when they come to your town! You will be reduced to quivering protoplasm. Contact HELLSHOCK for product at axiompdx@juno.com.

Asbury Lanes in Asbury Park, New Jersey hosted a massive ska, Oi!, punk and hardcore fest on August 26, 2006! The lineup was quite diverse with many solid representatives of the various genres. Look over this list of bands: THE TEMPLARS, HUB CITY STOMPERS, STEP 2 FAR, BOMB TOWN, FED UP!, BRUNT OF IT, BIGGER THOMAS, THE BLUEBEATS, TURNPIKE WRECKS, STEREO FREEZE, ALL DAY HELL, and WAREIKA HILL. For you skins and punks, you must listen to FED UP and STEP 2 FAR. Both bands carry the New York Hardcore banner high and proud! At the end of the evening, in Asbury Park, the mighty TEMPLARS delivered a quality set of skinhead rock 'n' roll. Even the copious amounts of alcohol consumed during this daylong event could not dampen the spirits of the crowd! Thanks go

out to all the bands involved, Asbury Lanes, and Mel, President of the New Jersey Rumblers Car Club.

When you are searching for product from NY hardcore bands, you must pursue the *No One Gets Out Alive* hardcore punk and Oi! compilation. This quality CD on United Riot Records features some of the most important young bands in the northeast. FED UP contributes their brutal hardcore song, "Last Straw," THE 86'ED provide a tight song called "Dropout," SKIN DISORDER sings their instant anthem "New York City," OFFENSIVE WEAPON will win you skinheads over with the first rate Oi! song "The Storm is Coming." Excellent! FIRST OFFENSE assaults you with "Run and Hide." CRUCIAL CHANGE bludgeons your senses with "Shutdown." FEAR CITY has a melodic skinhead rock 'n' roll song to offer called "Skinhead Drama." Last, but not least, New York City's RUN LIKE HELL fucking kick ass with "We Won't Tolerate It Anymore." This is good shit! For your CD compilation *No One Gets Out Alive* contact United Riot Records at www.unitedriotrecords.com.

Until next month, see you fucks at the bar!

CrimethInc. Workers' Collective Bullet-in

Hello there fellow MRR readers! This issue, our column details our experiences at the CrimethInc. Convergence in Winona, Minnesota, July 26 through 31. Using this column space to talk about that may seem a little self-absorbed, but the point is to go over what works and what doesn't in big public gatherings like that — whether they be punk fests, anarchist conferences, or what have you. Anyone who wants to get in touch should go to www.crimethinc.com, or write CrimethInc. Peasant Uprising, PO Box 2133, Greensboro, NC 27402. Anyway, on to the topic at hand — but, as our dear mentor George Tabb would, let's start from an unexpected place in the story…

Not long after the convergence I went to a family function. Picture me in the pews at Catholic Mass, the priest wearing a robe straight out of the 17th century and quoting obscure theology as he holds forth on how to be a model of obedience to God's will — and they say punk rockers' subcultural baggage is alienating! A good part of the people present at this particular event are not Catholic or even Christian, but this one man is in control of the proceedings to such an extent that those of us who aren't down with his program can't even recognize each other. The paths that brought us here, the dreams and desires we carry with us, the relationships we might have with one other—all these are inaccessible, irrelevant. Trapped like this, it's unthinkable that we could do anything together but sit in mute compliance.

Exactly eight and a half days earlier, two hundred of us have gathered on the green of a college campus outside an auditorium. Inside, bourgeois couples and theater enthusiasts watch a Shakespeare classic in a ritual not entirely unlike the one in the church.

We're no longer part of any recognizable ritual, however. Many of us are clad in dumpstered burlap sacks, cut in approximation of peasant frocks and adorned with individual slogans: "SERFS UP," "A wealthy man's heart is a slum," "We live to tread on kings," that last one taken from Shakespeare; the rest sport more absurd costumes. A complete drum corps, formed perhaps two hours earlier, confers excitedly. A lunatic without any protective gear is looking for a partner to join him in bicycle jousting; a teenager is perfecting his fire-breathing techniques; a couple of us hold wide-eyed children. Somebody has obtained an armload of copies of that day's edition of the local newspaper, which features front page coverage of our adventures the preceding evening. A 12-foot placard hung from a lamppost reads "KINGS WITHOUT KINGDOMS — KINGDOMS WITHOUT KINGS."

The clock advances another minute; the audience must be politely applauding now. The atmosphere is charged; the hum of the mob swells and subsides and swells again. Security guards have arrived, but they look puny and petrified, like a couple of scarecrows trying to face down a tsunami. This breathless anticipation is familiar to many of us, but here we get to experience it gratuitously — usually, we would be about to drag a mattress into traffic or storm a line of fully equipped riot police.

The doors of the theater daintily open to release the first patrons, the drum corps breaks into deafening rhythm, and mayhem erupts. From behind a nearby building, to the wonderment of all, the much-anticipated but as-yet-unseen king appears, thirty feet high, dragged by ten bent-backed attendants like a catapult or battering ram. The mob heaves forward, then opens to reveal a costumed squire and queen, the latter held aloft by four bearers and wielding a scepter inscribed "I RULE." The theater audience gathers at the edge of the throng, all ears and eyes.

Squire: Hark, ye citizens, and cease thy celebrations!

Thy king hath come with further declarations.

Citizens (shouting in unison): The king hath come! The king hath come!

With laws and taxes and impositions anon…

Squire: Bite thy tongues! Thy useless dissent!

The king will legislate with or without thy consent.

Thy social contract was signed at conception

And hath no clause permitting insurrection.

Citizens: No documents are needed to guarantee freedom!

We deny thy sovereignty! This king hath no kingdom!

The crowd surges upon the colossal king, tearing him to the ground and pulling the crown from his head. Pieces of the giant puppet are flying everywhere the way they would in a cartoon; two hundred dancing, shrieking maniacs trample them into the ground. With a series of reverberating booms, fireworks shoot up from the grass and fill the sky. "Who is this king?" shouts someone balanced precariously on the arm of a park bench.

"This king is a landlord!"
"A rapist!"
"A vivisector!"
"A politician!"
"The economy!"
"The police state!"
"The prison-industrial complex!"
"Our apathy!"
"Our boredom!"
"Our past!"

But wait — what's the purpose of all this? Surely the bourgeoisie aren't going to drop their handbags and join us in our bid for civil war just because we turn up at their theaters blowing fire and hot air.

No, let's be up-front: this is chiefly for us, the participants. In a world that squelches our fantasies, in which we so rarely get to determine the content of our lives, in which we're perpetually made to feel alone and insane, it's terrifically empowering to join a couple hundred comrades in affirming a reality that has nothing to do with profit or propriety. Had we not already reached record highs of openness, comfort, and morale, this would be a dismal charade for sure; the fact that it can be such an ecstatic, bacchanalian experience attests to the successes of the preceding days of this convergence. Afterwards, equipped with the energy and connections we've built up here, we'll go back to our home communities to step up our activities where it counts.

Even setting aside consideration of the future, of strategy and morale and momentum, there's something tremendously power-

ful about enjoying ourselves this much outside a nightclub or stadium. One thing anarchists can do is develop and employ tactics to defend our and others' interests from those in authority, and that's an approach to which many of us here have dedicated our lives; another thing we can do is explore ways of enjoying that take us beyond the consolation prizes of capitalist entertainment and leisure. Presumably, if hierarchy is as crippling as we say it is, non-hierarchical games and pastimes should be more compelling than their hierarchical counterparts; presumably, if we pioneer some of these, others will join us in them and in our other activities as well. In doing so, we can unlock dormant parts of ourselves—playfulness, good faith, willingness to risk — and give others, also desperate for forbidden pleasures they can't even imagine, a reason to invest themselves in the long shot of revolution.

A More Anarchist Convergence

Speaking of formats that put the participants first, let's compare the model we've developed over the past half-decade of convergences to the more standard approach exemplified by the National Conference on Organized Resistance (NCOR) and the various anarchist book fairs. In the latter case, a circle of organizers book a few presenters and tablers and reserve a space for a few scheduled events; many of the needs of those who attend — housing, for example, and sometimes even food — are left to be handled on an individual basis. Often, these events take place at college campuses and rental halls; arguably, these are accessible to a wide range of people (ever tried to get around a campsite in a wheelchair?), but their very architecture is designed to serve capitalist ends, and that cannot help but color the interactions that take place within. Likewise, in providing for their own needs, participants rarely stray from the standard fare of dominant society: small groups go out to eat, visitors stay with friends in isolated houses and apartments or even rent hotel rooms. People who show up without having coordinated their roles far in advance find themselves cast as spectators and consumers. Some leave conferences like this with a hollow feeling; it can be a demoralizing experience to be surrounded by so many people who share your politics and commitments and yet still feel that you are separated from them, interacting the way you might interact with anyone else in consumerist society.

In contrast, the model used for CrimethInc. convergences draws more on the Earth First! rendezvous format, promoting autonomous organization and collective means of meeting individual needs. For the duration of the convergence, everyone stayed at one campsite, where all the events not specifically intended for the local community took place. Transportation, child-care, kitchen work, conflict mediation and emotional support, camp infrastructure, and every other aspect of collective living were organized on a volunteer basis. Unlike at many conferences, neither registration fees nor donations were asked of participants, and nothing was offered for sale; the bulk of necessary resources were obtained outside capitalist channels — here's to being part of a community of petty criminals! — and the rest were obtained with money raised at benefit events. The entire group involved in the convergence formed, for its duration, a working model of a miniature anarchist community, which was an exciting and heartening experience.

Likewise, although workshops and performances were solicited far in advance, a great deal of time was set aside for more spontaneous presentations, and everyone who attended was encouraged to share something in this way. This broke down the artificial hierarchy of presenters and listeners so everyone could learn from one another and develop their speaking skills. Some who turned up intending just to watch from the sidelines ended up presenting workshops to great acclaim. Similarly, rather than individual tables at which merchants sold competing products, there was a library in which everyone set out the materials they'd brought to give away and collected whatever they needed for their communities. This was quite successful; a great many participants left with a full bag of zines and papers.

In addition to the library, there were several other stations set up around the campsite, including a child-care station, a mental health sanctuary, an arts and crafts center, and a prisoner support station at which more than 65 letters were written to prisoners and participants learned how to organize their own prisoner support programs. Each of these was bottom-lined by a small group who solicited assistance from others as necessary.

To be fair to the organizers of NCOR and the San Francisco anarchist book fair, the smaller scale of our gathering probably made it easier to get by with less formal structure, and there are many things accomplished at those events that would be impossible at a campsite in the middle of nowhere. But the essential lesson — that people are more powerful when they organize themselves collectively on a volunteer basis than they are when they are directed by a small group — stands. The bulk of the advance organizing was actually carried out by a couple 18-year-olds — that'll teach us older folks to be ageist! The last-minute cancellation of the original campsite and the group that was to handle all the cooking didn't faze us a bit, thanks to the initiative and self-organization of the participants.

In contrast to last summer's convergence, at which there was a sexual assault and a controversy about whether a known informant should be permitted to attend, there were scarcely any internal conflicts this year. Some of us attribute this to the decision to make our consent, security, and exclusion policies for the convergence explicit in advance. Organizers also asked that there be no drugs or alcohol at the site or at any of the off-site activities save one. This went over surprisingly well. Participants in the convergence represented a wide range of relationships to substance use, but no one complained about it as an imposition on their freedom. Many people found their social interactions at the convergence more candid and intimate and ultimately more intoxicating in the absence of intoxicants.

There's still room for improvement, of course. While many people who did not come planning to do workshops ended up doing them, including some folks from far outside the demographics one would expect at a CrimethInc. gathering, the ratio of male presenters to female and trans presenters was still dramatically skewed compared to, say, the ratio of men to women and trans folks volunteering for kitchen shifts. Clearly, some people felt more comfortable and entitled in the atmosphere of the convergence than others did, and the ways we solicited and encouraged participation didn't help to offset this.

Similarly, while a couple of the most pivotal organizers were people of color, the overwhelming majority of participants were white. The average age hovered in the low twenties, if not younger, though people twice that showed up. Those of us who mail out CrimethInc. propaganda know it's exciting to a lot more than just suburban white youth; we have to figure out how to organize future convergences so they can invite and include those from other walks of life who are also seeking escape routes and comrades.

The Locals, the Media, and the Authorities

Two events — Friday's Critical Mass bicycle ride and Sunday's Really Really Free Market — provide excellent examples of what does and doesn't work when it comes to connecting convergences like this one with local communities. In the former case, the vast influx of out-of-towners swelled the numbers of an existing local project, making for the most successful Critical Mass in Winona history. This was possible thanks to the efforts of the local Down'n'Dirty bike collective, which had fixed up several dozen bicycles in advance for visitors to ride. The 'Free Market, on the other hand, was the first of its kind in Winona. Although it was fliered heavily and a few locals did turn out, the bulk of the attendees were subculturally identified visitors,

which if anything made for an environment that discouraged more local participation. This is the second year running of us attempting to hold a town's first ever Really Really Free Market as part of a convergence, and in both cases we've seen the same results. We can only conclude that whoever plans to host next summer's convergence had better start holding regular 'Free Markets now if they want one to be part of the festivities!

In the course of the weekend, three different front-page articles about the convergence appeared in the local newspaper; all provided fairly positive, if vacuous, coverage. It helped a great deal that the local organizers had thought about media relations in advance and were already in touch with sympathetic reporters. This coverage must have made it less tempting for the police tangle with us; demonizing us in the media is usually an essential part of their strategy when they plan to disrupt an event. The absence of a local media liaison proved catastrophic for the CrimethInc. convergence in Louisville in 2003; organizers should be sure to take this into account in the future as well.

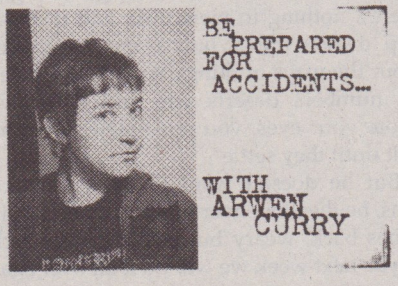
After police disruption at previous convergences and the recent escalation of anti-anarchist repression in this country, some of us feared that there might be serious trouble with the authorities. However, although they'd clearly been briefed from on high about us — beat cops were able to rattle off our consent policy while harassing stragglers days before the convergence even began — they didn't make any serious moves on us.

What does this say about the authorities' strategy for dealing with the anarchist menace at this historical juncture? First, though they are aware of us and have in fact declared us domestic terror threat number one, they are not in a position to make wholesale war upon us, so we can be done with our paranoid fantasies of the whole anarchist community being marched off to an internment camp and get back to work on community organizing and clandestine direct action. Second, they are watching us, so we have to be extremely careful. We now know that there has been at least one federal infiltrator present at the last two CrimethInc. Conventions — unfortunately, we learned this because she subsequently arranged the arrests of three other participants on conspiracy charges. We can assume that they regard events like these as prime opportunities to fish for further victims. Form affinity groups to carry out illegal activity with people you've known for years, after meeting their families and getting to know them intimately; meeting someone at an anarchist convergence is not enough background to share sensitive information with them, let alone high-risk undertakings.

The Road Ahead

I think almost all of us came away from this convergence with an expanded idea of what events like this can be and a strengthened commitment to making them happen. The authors of the "CrimethInc. Stockholder Report" published earlier this year concluded that the primary defect of the CrimethInc. experiment thus far has been its failure to interconnect those moved by its outreach efforts, and in that light it is all the more important that participatory and accessible events be taking place. We need to put energy into building networks and offering visible points of entry into the anarchist underground, building on our successes and honing our abilities to bring people together in exciting ways. The infrastructures we build at gatherings like this one are not especially important in and of themselves — they are merely infrastructures for infrastructures, designed to enable people to do the local organizing that really matters — but they are a start.

Sitting in church with our families, or in our workplaces with our fellow employees, or in shopping malls with neighbors we may not even have met yet, we're often lucky to have a chance to speak at all, let alone make a compelling case for a different way of life. But if we organize our own social events and networks, building up enough visibility and social leverage to be known outside the so-called radical ghetto, one day we won't be the only ones starting these conversations.



So I've been irregular with this column.

It has something to do with reassessing my relationship with writing, which feels more serious to me these days and less like something I can drag out of myself at the last minute—or not, at least, with an easy conscience. I think that writing matters—not mine in particular, but all of it that anyone reads. But if you think too hard about who is on the other end reading when you're writing, you have a problem.

I've had some jitters, and some doubts. I wanted to try to write an advice column, but the problems people sent were either too serious or too trivial, and again: jitters and doubts. If you have any nice, middle-of-the-road crises, please drop a line.

The other thing is that writing is hard, and I've been lazy recently. But I'd like to turn over a new leaf, if you'll let me.

After *Maximum* I went to graduate school, which socially was isolating and strange and made me grateful for punk and everything that means. Other people—maybe you have forgotten this, like I did—go to dance parties and take the dates they meet in bars to other bars or to restaurants. They seem happy enough, except for the ennui that has no release, the yearning for community that has no resolve, and the unfocused confusion about their consumerism and complicity with evil. I may not have personally overcome any of these problems, but I know how to complain about it, and that's something.

I would like to read more of people's stories about what happens in their lives as they get older and gradually shed the costume jewelry (figuratively speaking) of punk and move into the next set of problems. Taking care of a kid (well, maybe we have this covered) or a parent or a furniture shop or a novel. I'm not very interested in people who stay exactly the same over the years, and I'm annoyed that this is a model of what is supposed to (not) happen to us as we get older. For certain temperaments, this may be a respectable future—there are always a few exceptionally consistent, more or less content people around, and more power to them. I just don't want to listen to them. I'm also not interested when people get tired of punk and then abandon it overnight—not just the bands and the silly clothes but the principles as well.

The exciting thing is what might happen—and surely is happening all the time—when punks reach an age at which they are moved to follow their talents and dreams in more substantial ways, and instead of going back to being ordinary people like the people they hated in high school, they instead become weirdo parents, electricians, artists, aid workers, and what have you.

I realize that people have been writing songs and zines about this very topic forever and ever, so forgive me: From the mast of the ship, the shores are in fog.

Punk wasn't ever, for me, about rebelling against a repressive or oppressive family. I guess to some degree it was about finding a family that was as life-affirming and physically affectionate, as smart and loving and wide as I needed when I was young, and probably still need but have better learned to live without. And through much blundering and trial and error, I have succeeded at finding that, over and over, in fact.

As we grow older we tend to pull into ourselves, which is less risky but not necessarily really safer. To some degree it indicates focus and self-possession, but it also can mean weariness—social exhaustion from too many betrayals—or perceived betrayals—and disappointments, and misunderstandings. Most

of us long to be understood, and it's understandable that when we find someone that understands us, we run hand in hand to hole up in a cave and only come out for coffee.

Here's what I think: it's punks' job not to give up and run for the cave. And it's punk's job not to be so boring and predictable and fearful of change, and to give people room. That way when punks get older and change—as life demands that they will—they will still find a place to belong.

The Last Time We Broke Up

The last time we break up, it is the same as any morning, except that instead of "wanna get coffee?" he says, "I'm through competing with ghosts."

Although I don't seem to be sweating, I immediately start to smell as if I have spent the morning cleaning out a stable.

He says I am self-absorbed.

True, I say, but at least I'm not self-centered.

Well neither am I, he says.

True, I say. Just saying.

The post-breakup-sex quesadillas stick in my throat. We go back to sleep—a thick, skin-to-skin sleep that I struggle out from once or twice pinned under the heaviness of a contract, and yet apart from it too, as if watching myself sign documents from across the room. When we wake up for real, I press the bones of my hips against the muscles of his lower back.

"Yeah, yeah. You have hips," he says. "The stingray, disguised as a squirrel."

All morning he has been comparing our relationship's demise to the death by venomous sting of TV's famous snake handler, old what's-his-name. I find the metaphor funny but the death itself seems peaceful—the likely and fitting end of a deliberate life's path.

The roommate's Tom Waits record seeps through the wall.

"The piano has been drinking, not me," says my boyfriend.

"The piano has been doing vodka shots with the bartender who has a crush on him, not me," I retort.

"The piano just lost her boyfriend because she couldn't make up her mind, not me."

"…"

He puts his arm around me, backwards, without turning to face me.

"Don't cry, piano," he says.

Finally he helps me collect my bass guitar and my underpants; my magazines and the Warren Zevon records. We carry it all to my sister's car and go to get coffee. The Mexican breakfast place is closed, so we are compelled to patronize the place where San Franciscans go to feel like New Yorkers. Ahh, you fucking chumps. A little character in every cup.

It is a perfect September late afternoon. The pulverized remains of a Styrofoam cooler float on the street and we kick into it like a snowdrift as we walk. We sit outside a church in a desecrated little park, on a bench encrusted with Steel Reserve, and launch into one of those conversations in which each sentence feels like an hour's hard labor. After twenty minutes we are floored by the effort of speaking about what was so easy to live.

I know it's good between us, but what if it's bad? I'm afraid I'll make the wrong decision. The thing is, people have done nasty things to me in the past. I'm terrified of losing anything else. I want to control everything so that I'm less likely to disappear.

As we talk my tentacled mind reaches out to all the places, North Bay to South Bay, where my parents once moved around with roommates and lovers, cats and hamsters, husbands and wives.

It's your fault I don't believe in love.

A lie—twice a lie. I retract the accusation. Reconsider.

It's your fault I don't believe in marriage.

I can live with that, can't I? Conveniently, I don't care much about marriage anyway. But that still isn't quite it.

It's your fault I'm never satisfied.

For a while my mind goes fuzzy like it did when I was six and my dad tried to explain algebra. "What if a number isn't really any *particular* number, but just the *idea* of a number?"

I feel the city tremble, full and hot around me. And as I whine inside I am grateful for my freedom and other dangerous gifts. There's nothing to memorize, and it doesn't help to know things, only as much as you can about the ways of things. And if the grace of the numbers deserts you and they swim before your eyes, you must slow down and wait until they settle.

But he doesn't want to impose abstractions, be they lovely or terrible, and my mind comes back, weary but clear. If I am lucky, maybe next week we will do it all over again.

Party Quiz

Take with beer or coffee. Send me your answers and see how you compare to fellow *MRR* readers!

. Would you rather lose an eye, or a hand?

2. Would you rather be a brilliant but obscure artist, or mediocre and successful?

3. Would you rather die by fire or by drowning?

4. Choking or being mauled to death by a wild animal?

17. Would you live stranded in the woods, or on a desert island?

5. Which five people of all time would you be stranded with on a desert island?

6. Which five people you *know*?

7. What if you knew you had to restart civilization with these people? Does it change your answers?

8. Would you rather be a master writer, or master carpenter?

9. Preacher or politician?

10. Soldier or cop?

11. Would you rather have four kids, or be celibate for life?

12. Be 12 years old until the end of time, or 85?

13. Would you rather make out with Ric Ocasek, or Fred Schneider from the B-52s?

14. Richard Hell or Darby Crash?

15. Debbie Harry or Patti Smith?

14. George Bush Jr. or Saddam Hussein?

15. If you only get to pick two, sex, drugs, or rock 'n' roll?

16. What if you only get to pick one?

17. Would you rather have gonorrhea, or a totally annoying laugh?

18. Terrible migraines, or an anger problem?

19. Uncontrollable public tears, or uncontrollable high school thespian-like public singing?

OK, enough for now. See you next time.

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This isn't going to be one of those columns that has a well-drawn story with natural ups and downs, nor will it feature an agenda-fueled rant, a thought-out opinion, or even much of a point, really. Why? Because I'm supposed to be on vacation, but instead I am sitting in a very random internet cafe in deep Southeast Portland that is hunting-lodge-themed, complete with coarse, inelegant mooseheads and fake plastic tree trunks for chairs. It's my own fault—I should've learned when I was a kid that you should always get your homework done before vacation starts, but the learning of some lessons remains ever-pending.

I do have a few magazine-related things to mention, so I will get on with it...

State of the Union

OK, I've got some news: I've decided to step down from my position as coordinator of *Maximum Rocknroll*. Not all that soon, though,

let me just say—I am thinking I am gonna be around for another bunch of issues, so I'll still be around well into 2007, basically to the three year anniversary of when I first walked through vaunted doors of *Maximum Rocknroll* HQ. Why the early notice then? Well, first of all, it takes time to find a new coordinator. It seems like for a good portion of my time at *MRR*, between the content and distro positions, we've been either looking for or training a new coordinator, mostly because it's not a job to be tossed around or prepared for lightly. That is to say, it's probably gonna take the better part of the next year finding someone new, and making sure they are ready to run the magazine. Regardless, whoever takes over for me is gonna be great, and is going to enjoy Chris, Martin, and everyone else's company while putting out a killer punk fanzine. Pretty radical stuff.

Which brings me to the point: we are going to need a new coordinator, and that person could be you. We are particularly hoping to fill my shoes with a lady punk, to counterbalance Chris and Martin's uh, manliness, but if you are interested in the job, you should drop us a line regardless of gender. I am serious—if you are at all interested, you should let us know, even if you think that the position is somehow out of your grasp. I mean, how hard could it be, right? All you have to do is put out a magazine every month. And answer Floyd's interview questions. Piece of cake.

So, that is my big announcement, but there is other stuff happening here at *MRR* as well. First of all, the compilation LP—called *Public Safety*—that we've been working on for the last year or so is finally done...almost. We are still (as of this writing) waiting to receive the covers and inserts, but we are just one record-stuffing/pizza party away from having the damn thing ready to ship out. There is a limited red vinyl version for those lucky first few who directly mailorder through us, but everyone gets the meat of the goods: a thick, newsprint magazine insert (*MRR* #282 1/2), and a long-player of some total jams from 26 of your favorite bands. Check out www.maximumrocknroll.com for ordering details.

What else, what else? The last day of summer came and went a few days ago, but those of us in the lovely Bay Area are lucky enough to be enjoying one of the many perks of living here: indian summer. Warm, blustry days with the promise of dragging out the good times just a little bit longer. You know, the sort of days that beg you not to do anything productive like, you know, writing a cohesive column. But for that, there's always next month! Till then, stay punk/stay pissed, and enjoy this issue of your favorite punk bible. Love, Golnar.

***

Playlist: V/A–*Public Safety*, Reigning Sound, Toxik Ephex, Burial–new EP, Deep Sleep EP, Idiots Rule–demo, Bad Brains (an aside: a bunch of us went to see a screening of the new live Bad Brains DVD that was recently released. It features footage from a three-day stint at CBGB's in 1982, and shows the Bad Brains in top form, which is something to see indeed. The sound and footage is of mind-melting caliber for anyone with even one iota of interest in "live music" or "punk rock." Another aside: a few songs into the screening I noticed that I was at there with a bunch of Babylon-inducing queers, all of whom were rocking the fuck out. Sorry, HR. Fuck you, Jah.)

golnar@maximumrocknroll.com
Golnar Nikpour / PMB #241 / 530 Divisadero St. / San Francisco, CA 94117

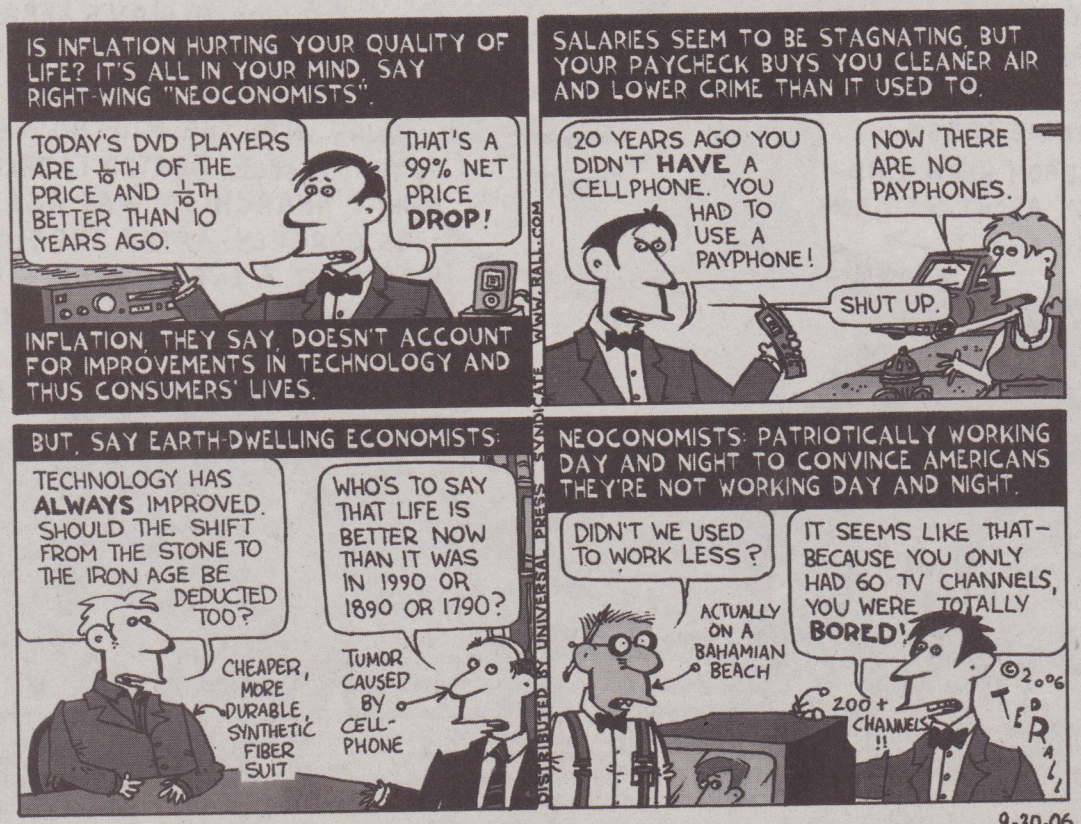
THREE CHORD POLITICS

chris hubbard

Well, here I sit, alone at 1:38 A.M. in the south wing of the *Maximum* estate, putting the finishing touches on the latest issue. Precious little room remains for my inane ramblings, but let me be the first to say, and I speak on behalf of the entire *MRR* staff—Golnar, you haven't left yet, but we miss ya already.

Contact: chris@maximumrocknroll.com

P.S. I'd like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Amoeba employee who priced that COPOUT EP at $1.99—it's no first GERMS single, but I was still glad to come across it sitting there in the used bin last weekend...



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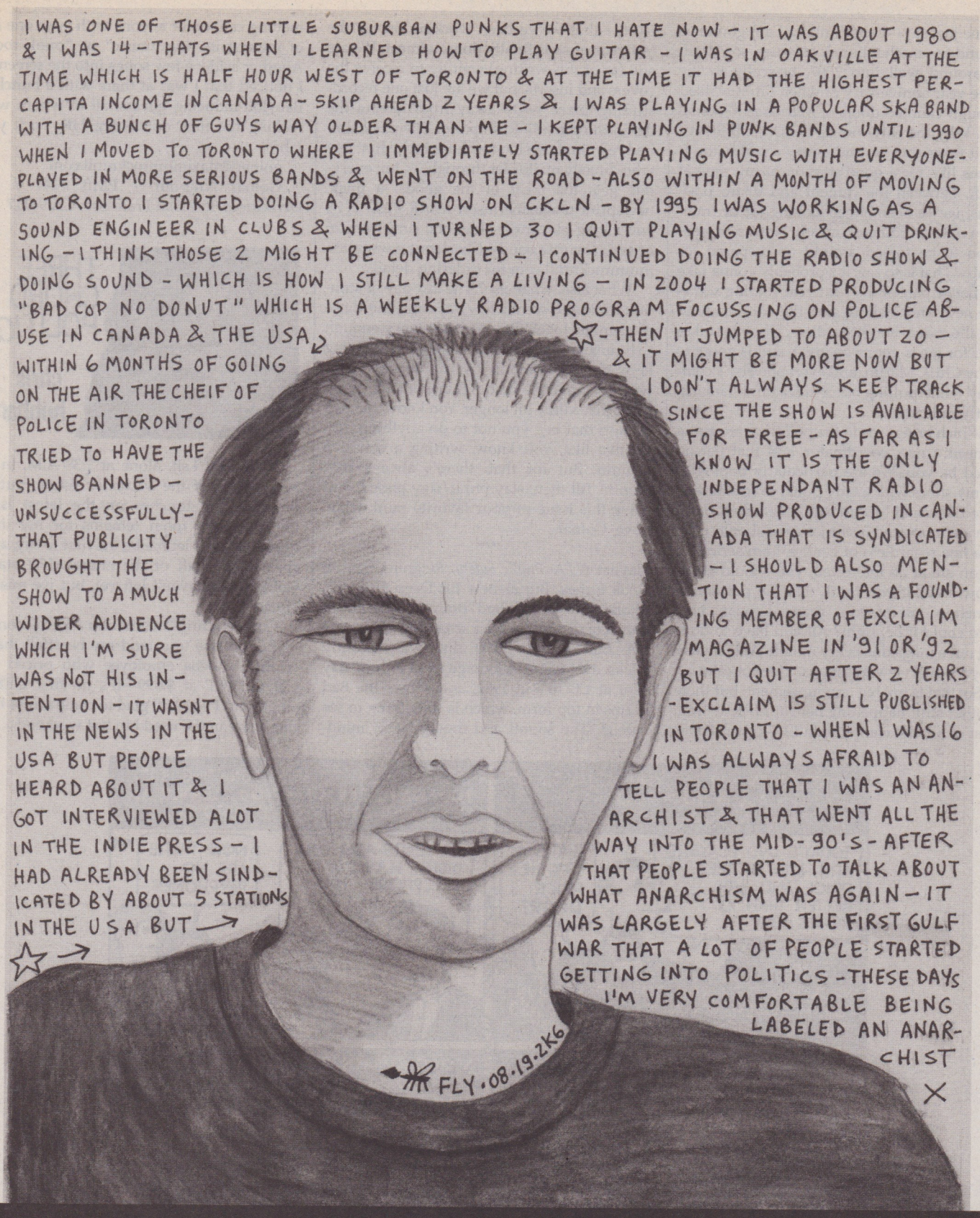

Ron Anicich – 08/19/2K6 – Toronto Canada

I met Ron sometime in the mid '90s but I can't remember how we met – I think I met him through the folks at Black Scorpion Productions who organized the Punk Fest in '94 or '95 – I definitely remember riding up to the Fest with Ron & Jola – it was such a blast – hundreds of punks camped out in the woods for a weekend full of nonstop music & debauchery – I had just shaved my mohawked head down to the skin & as soon as I stepped out of the car at the site I got attacked by a million black flies & mosquitoes – anyway – Ron was doing sound at the Fest & later back in Toronto I went on his radio show – Ron even played a few gigs drumming for Zero Content when we would come to Toronto – I highly recommend checking out his radio show – www.badcopnodonut.fm

to contact Fly email: fly@bway.net (put MRR in the subject so I know its not spam) or check the website www.bway.net/~fly – PEOPs zines (#2 & #3) are now available for $5 pp in the USA – write to Fly, PO Box 1318, Cooper Stn, NYC, NY10276.

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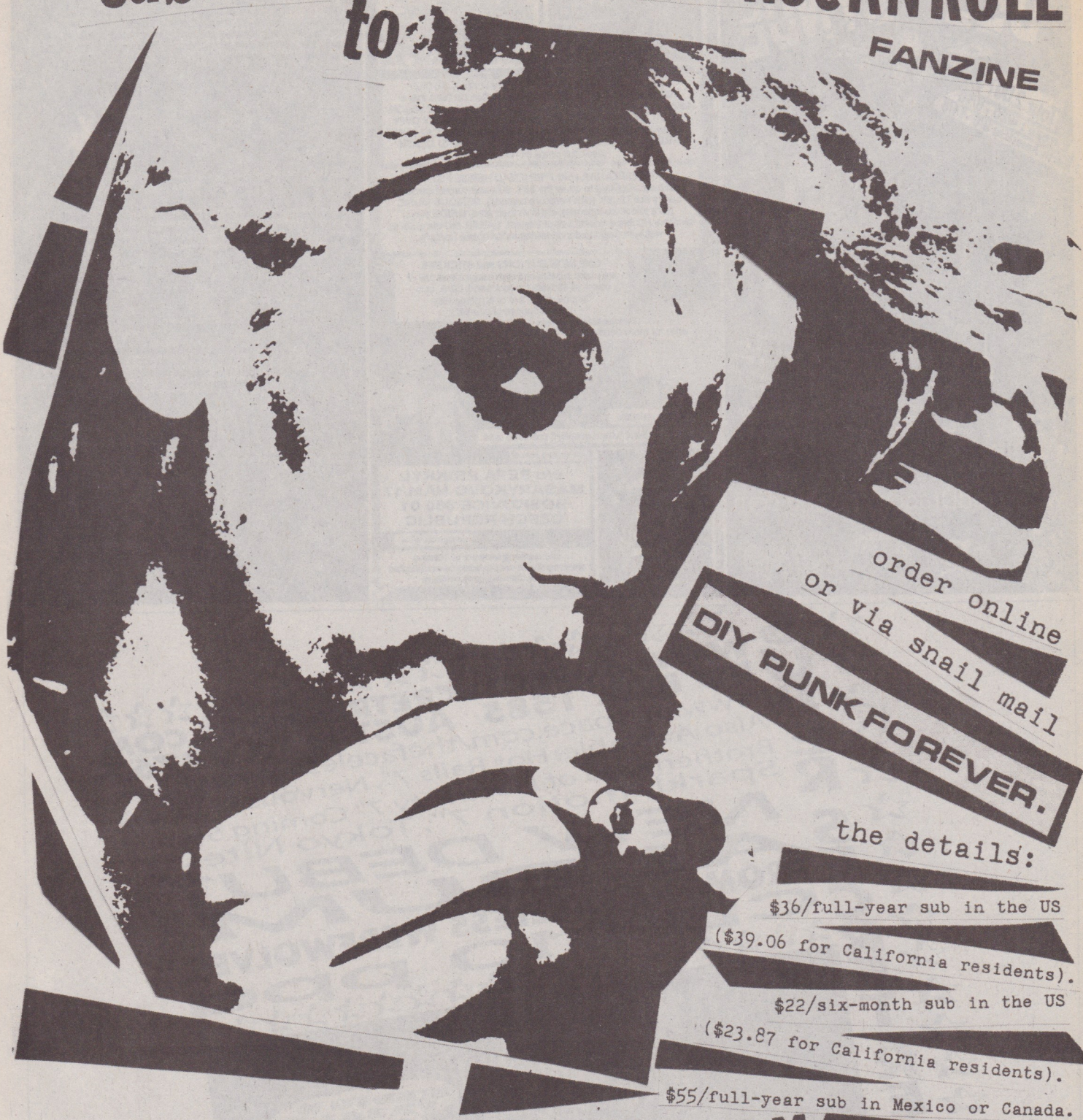

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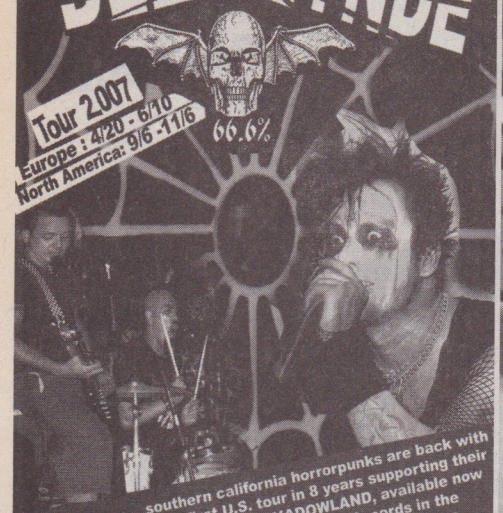

southern california horrorpunks are back with their first U.S. tour in 8 years supporting their latest release, SHADOWLAND, available now on Duane Peter's Disaster Records in the U.S. , People Like You Records in Europe, and your local store. www.deepeynde.com. new album out spring 2007

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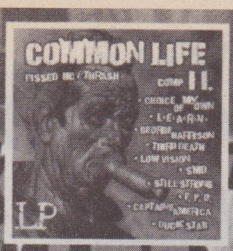

v/a COMMON LIFE vol.II 12"LP (DEAD HEROES 002)
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MRR NEWS

MRR NEWS FOR ISSUE # COMPILED BY ARIEL CELESTE & GOLNAR NIKPOUR

THE CRISIS OF HEALTH CARE

Insured But Not Protected: How Many Adults Are Underinsured?

from an article by the Commonwealth Fund www.cmwf.org

In addition to the 45 million uninsured adults in the United States, another 16 million adults were underinsured in 2003, meaning their insurance did not adequately protect them against catastrophic health care expenses, finds a study in *Health Affairs.* An estimated total of 61 million adults, or 35 percent of individuals, ages 19 to 64, had either no insurance, sporadic coverage, or insurance coverage that exposed them to high health care costs during 2003.

In "Insured But Not Protected: How Many Adults Are Underinsured?" (*Health Affairs* Web Exclusive, June 14, 2005), The Commonwealth Fund's Cathy Schoen, Michelle M. Doty, Sara R. Collins, and Alyssa L. Holmgren find that inadequate coverage—much like no coverage at all—creates obstacles to care and other burdens. Underinsured adults are almost as likely as the uninsured to go without needed medical care and to incur medical debt. Lower-income and sicker adults are most at risk of having inadequate coverage.

The authors warn that recent market trends will likely place increasing numbers of insured patients and their families at risk, due to higher cost-sharing and out-of-pocket cost exposure. An increase in the numbers of underinsured could undermine effective care, health, and financial security—making it harder to distinguish the uninsured from the insured.

Methods

The extent of the underinsured problem has not been assessed since a 1995 study, partly due to the lack of a working definition. Using a 2003 Commonwealth Fund survey of 3,293 adults, ages 19 to 64, Schoen and colleagues estimated the number of underinsured adults. They define an underinsured person as one who has insurance all year but has inadequate financial protection, as indicated by one of three conditions: 1) annual out-of-pocket medical expenses amount to 10 percent or more of income; 2) among low-income adults (incomes under 200 percent of the federal poverty level), out-of-pocket medical expenses amount to 5 percent or more of income; or 3) health plan deductibles equal or exceed 5 percent of income.

Who Are the Underinsured?

The study finds that 12 percent of adults who were insured all year—nearly 16 million people—were underinsured in 2003. Adults with lower incomes were more likely than those with higher incomes to be underinsured: 73 percent of the underinsured had annual incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. An additional 45 million adults were uninsured either all or part of the year, meaning that a total of 61 million adults were either underinsured or uninsured. Adults with chronic disease or in fair or poor health were at high risk: 43 percent were either uninsured or underinsured.

Access to Care

Relative to those with more adequate insurance, the underinsured were significantly more likely to go without care because of costs. In fact, they reported rates of cost-related, forgone care close to those of the uninsured.

More than one-half of the underinsured (54%) and uninsured (59%) went without needed care during the year: they failed to fill a prescription, skipped a test or follow-up, failed to visit a doctor for a medical problem, and/or did not get specialist care.

Medical Bills

Levels of financial stress among the underinsured rivaled levels among the uninsured and were four times the rates observed among the more adequately insured. Nearly one-half (46%) of the underinsured were contacted by a collection agency for medical bills and more than one-third (35%) said they had to change their way of life to pay medical bills.

Double Jeopardy

Inadequate coverage left those with health problems in double jeopardy: failing to get needed care and, at the same time, grappling with medical bills. These problems were most acute among adults with low incomes and adults with health problems.

Yet, even after taking into account differences in income, health, age, and other characteristics, the underinsured and uninsured were still significantly more likely to report access concerns and negative care experiences than those with adequate coverage.

Coverage Gaps

Compared with the adequately insured, the underinsured were less likely to have prescription drug coverage, dental coverage, or vision benefits and were more likely to face deductibles of $500 or more. In spite of these gaps in coverage, one-third of the underinsured (37%) had high annual premiums ($1,500 or higher). Nearly one-half (47%) paid premiums that amounted to 5 percent or more of their annual income.

Policy Implications

The study highlights the need for policy attention to insurance design. Current private market policies rarely adjust cost-sharing relative to income. Without policy attention, current trends toward rising cost-sharing will likely mean increasing numbers of underinsured among modest and lower-incomes adult and their families.

Facts and Figures

An estimated 61 million U.S. adults—35 percent of individuals, ages 19 to 64—had either no insurance, sporadic coverage, or insurance that exposed them to catastrophic medical costs during 2003.

Half of the underinsured (54%) and uninsured (59%) went without at least one of four needed medical services—double the rate of those with adequate insurance.

Rates of medical bill stress among the underinsured were almost equal to those reported by the uninsured. For example, 46 percent of underinsured individuals were contacted by a collection agency regarding their medical bills, compared with 44 percent of uninsured individuals.

VAPORIZING TRASH AS SUSTAINABILITY

from the Associated Press

A Florida county has grand plans to ditch its dump, generate electricity and help build roads—all by vaporizing garbage at temperatures hotter than the sun. The $425 million facility expected to be built in St. Lucie County will use lightning-like plasma arcs to turn trash into gas and rock-like material. It will be the first such plant in the nation operating on such a massive scale and the largest in the world.

Supporters say the process is cleaner than traditional trash incineration, though skeptics question whether the technology can meet the lofty expectations. The 100,000-square-foot plant, slated to be operational in two years, is expected to vaporize 3,000 tons of garbage a day. County officials estimate their entire landfill—4.3 million tons of trash collected since 1978 — will be gone in 18 years.

No byproduct will go unused, according to Geoplasma, the Atlanta-based company building and paying for the plant.

Synthetic, combustible gas produced in the process will be used to run turbines to create about 120 megawatts of electricity that will be sold back to the grid. The facility will operate on about a third of the power it generates, free from outside electricity.

About 80,000 pounds of steam per day will be sold to a neighboring Tropicana Products Inc. facility to power the juice plant's turbines. Sludge from the county's wastewater treatment plant will be vaporized, and a material created from melted organic matter—up to 600 tons a day—will be hardened into slag, and sold for use in road and construction projects.

"This is sustainability in its truest and finest form," said Hilburn Hillestad, president of Geoplasma, a subsidiary of Jacoby Development Inc.

For years, some waste-management facilities have been converting methane—created by rotting trash in landfills—to power. Others also burn trash to produce electricity.

But experts say population growth will limit space available for future landfills.

"We've only got the size of the planet," said Richard Tedder, program administrator for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's solid waste division. "Because of all of the pressures of development, people don't want landfills. It's going to be harder and harder to site new landfills, and it's going to be harder for existing landfills to continue to expand."

The plasma-arc gasification facility in St. Lucie County, on central Florida's Atlantic Coast, aims to solve that problem by eliminating the need for a landfill. Only two similar facilities are operating in the world — both in Japan — but are gasifying garbage on a much smaller scale.

Up to eight plasma arc-equipped cupolas will vaporize trash year-round, non-stop. Garbage will be brought in on conveyor belts and dumped into the cylindrical cupolas where it falls into a zone of heat more than 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit.

"We didn't want to do it like everybody else," said Leo Cordeiro, the county's solid waste director. "We knew there were better ways." No emissions are released during the closed-loop gasification, Geoplasma says. The only emissions will come from the synthetic gas-powered turbines that create electricity. Even that will be cleaner than burning coal or natural gas, experts say.

Few other toxins will be generated, if any at all, Geoplasma says.

But critics disagree. "We've found projects similar to this being misrepresented all over the country," said Monica Wilson of the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives. Wilson said there aren't enough studies yet to prove the company's claims that emissions will likely be less than from a standard natural-gas power plant.

She also said other companies have tried to produce such results and failed. She cited two similar facilities run by different companies in Australia and Germany that closed after failing to meet emissions standards. "I think this is the time for the residents of this county to start asking some tough questions," Wilson said.

Bruce Parker, president and CEO of the Washington, D.C.-based National Solid Wastes Management Association, scoffs at the notion that plasma technology will eliminate the need for landfills.

"We do know that plasma arc is a legitimate technology, but let's see first how this thing works for St. Lucie County," Parker said. "It's too soon for people to make wild claims that we won't need landfills."

Louis Circeo, director of Georgia Tech's plasma research division, said that as energy prices soar and landfill fees increase, plasma-arc technology will become more affordable. "Municipal solid waste is perhaps the largest renewable energy resource that is available to us," Circeo said, adding that the process "could not only solve the garbage and landfill problems in the United States and elsewhere, but it could significantly alleviate the current energy crisis."

He said that if large plasma facilities were put to use nationwide to vaporize trash, they could theoretically generate electricity equivalent to about 25 nuclear power plants.

Americans generated 236 million tons of garbage in 2003, about 4.5 pounds per person, per day, according to the latest figures from the Environmental Protection Agency. Roughly 130 million tons went to landfills — enough to cover a football field 703 miles high with garbage.

Circeo said criticism of the technology is based on a lack of understanding. "We are going to put emissions out, but the emissions are much lower than virtually any other process, especially a combustion process in an incinerator," he said. Circeo said that both plants operating in Japan, where emissions standards are more stringent than in the US, are producing far less pollution than regulations require.

"For the amount of energy produced, you get significantly less of certain pollutants like sulfur dioxide and particulate matter," said Rick Brandes, chief of the Environmental Protection Agency's waste minimization division.

Geoplasma expects to recoup its $425 million investment, funded by bonds, within 20 years through the sale of electricity and slag. "That's the silver lining," said Hillestad, adding that St. Lucie County won't pay a dime. The company has assumed full responsibility for interest on the bonds.

County Commissioner Chris Craft said the plasma process "is bigger than just the disposal of waste for St. Lucie County. "It addresses two of the world's largest problems—how to deal with solid waste and the energy needs of our communities," Craft said. "This is the end of the rainbow. It will change the world."

WAIT A MINUTE...FORGET WHAT I SAID ABOUT THE CRUSADES...

from an article on aljazeera.net

Pope Benedict has said he is "deeply sorry" for the angry reaction to his remarks on Islam and that the medieval text which he quoted from about jihad did not reflect his own opinion.

He told pilgrims, standing in heavy rain at his Castelgandolfo summer residence near Rome on Sunday, he was shocked by the reaction to his speech given at the University of Regensburg in Germany on Tuesday.

"I am deeply sorry for the reactions in some countries to a few passages of my address at the University of Regensburg, which were considered offensive to the sensibility of Muslims," he said.

"These in fact were a quotation from a medieval text, which do not in any way express my personal thought. I hope this serves to appease hearts and to clarify the true meaning of my address, which in its totality was and is an invitation to frank and sincere dialogue, with mutual respect."

The Vâtican issued a statement on Saturday saying the pope hoped Muslims would understand the "true sense" of the words he used in the speech. The statement, issued by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Vatican secretary of state, said the pope was "extremely upset" that parts of his speech "were able to sound offensive to the sensibilities of Muslim believers".

Bertone added that the comments, which led to several protests, had been interpreted in a way "that does not at all correspond to his intentions."

"The pope is unequivocally in favor of dialogue between religions and cultures," he said.

ANONYMITY IN THE AGE OF FULL DISCLOSURE

from an article by Elisabeth Daley (WireTap) on Alternet.org

Going too far: There are two proposed laws want to punish online "bad-talkers" by revealing their identities to anyone who finds them offensive.

Our lives are led increasingly online. According to the Pew Internet and American Life study, "the web has become the "new normal" in the American way of life." We buy and sell online, date, discuss and post credit card and social security numbers online. Private information, including photos, biographies, and zip codes are displayed in online profiles.

These are worlds in which identity theft by anonymous users happens frequently and can be personally devastating. "Someone hacked in my profile, and now it's saying "you are gay" all the time when you view my profile. How do I get it out?" asks one distressed user on a Topix.net forum.

The right to remain anonymous online seems to be the thorn in the side of parents, government and the average internet personality. Slashdot.org posters who don't reveal their identities are often referred to as "cowards." Many message boards do not allow users to post at all without a verifiable email address. As the internet becomes less and less anonymous, who is left to protect our privacy? And does anyone still care about anonymity online?

Blogger Seth Goodin views anonymity as a beast that needs to be tamed, "Virus writers are always anonymous. Vicious political lies (with faked Photoshop photos of political leaders, or false innuendo about personal lives) are always anonymous as well. Spam is anonymous. E-Bay fraudsters are anonymous too. It seems as though virtually all of the problems of the Net stem from this one flaw ... If we eliminate anonymity online, we can create a far more civil place."

Lawmakers in New Jersey seem to agree. Two new recent bills—A1327 and A2623—introduced to the state assembly require Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to disclose user information in any claim of defamation. If these bills were to pass, individuals who are accused of online bad-talk in New Jersey would face instant disclosure of their identities to their accusers.

While it may seem that having one's identity revealed may not be that serious, Paul Levy, an attorney who deals with cases of online defamation for the Public Citizen Litigation Group has seen just how serious it can be. Levy is currently representing one person who was identified as having criticized another person in his community. After his identity was fully revealed, he was forced to move out of his hometown.

Levy says that in other cases, "If you criticized a public official, you are worried about the various things public officials can do to you that are hard to prove...or if you criticized a mobster, you are worried about very nasty things that could get done to somebody ... "

However being identified doesn't just mean you suffer humiliation or threats, being identified also means a formal lawsuit may be brought against you, costing time and money. To make matters worse, the other New Jersey bill A2623 would require ISPs to remove any "inappropriate" content when notified by a user of material that is defamatory or offensive. This means that ISPs, who will not have time, resources or legal expertise to determine if something is or is not defamatory, will erase anything that may be considered offensive or illegal.

In addition to enabling countless futile law suits, these bills would violate the right to free speech and anonymity, something some may call the very essence of the internet. While these bills would only apply to cases brought to courts in New Jersey, if passed they could effect legislation in other states, and even around the world, legitimizing internet censorship.

It is free speech—often contingent upon anonymity—that leads people to speak openly about politics in countries where media is controlled by the state, such as Iran. Largely anonymous communities like Weblogistan provide a place for free expression that does not exist elsewhere in the Iranian media. Even in America, where free speech is protected by law, members of the military have resorted to using anonymous blogs to criticize Donald Rumsfeld, for example, or to write about their personal experiences at war, without giving away classified information.

The Supreme Court has ruled repeatedly that the First Amendment protects the right to anonymous free speech, with a 1995 Supreme Court ruling in McIntyre v. Ohio Elections Commission reading:

"Protections for anonymous speech are vital to democratic discourse. Allowing dissenters to shield their identities frees them to express critical, minority views...Anonymity is a shield from the tyranny of the majority...It thus exemplifies the purpose behind the Bill of Rights, and of the First Amendment in particular: to protect unpopular individuals from retaliation...at the hand of an intolerant society "

Levy points out that standards of identity protection offered in the real world are also offered online. However, he notes, the internet does not offer the same type of anonymity that may be found offline. After all, in the real world one may participate in a protest anonymously by wearing a costume, one may write a novel using a pen name or hand out unsigned leaflets or be quoted as an anonymous source for a news article. In each of these instances, an individual may be able to gauge how many people pose threats to the disclosure of her identity. Online this variable is unknown.

Levy goes even further and says that anonymity "is an illusion, because most things you do online are trackable because you leave footprints. You leave internet protocol numbers that can be tracked back to you unless you are pretty sophisticated about using anonymizers, which may or may not work."

While most people are not tech savvy enough to know what to do with IP numbers, internet programmers and government agencies are often able to decipher and use this information.

Dave Del Torto, founder of Crypto Rights Foundation—an organization that uses encryption to provide security to human rights activists and journalists—champions Levy's point, saying, "I'm not one of those people who has to wash their hands 30 times a day, but when I am out there on the Electronic Frontier, I drag a branch behind me." Del Torto believes the more technology is used, the less secure we are.

(Elizabeth Daley is a San Francisco based writer. For the full transcript of this piece, please see www.alternet.org)

ATTENTION: MESSAGE BOARD DUDES

Internet addicts halfway house opens in Shanghai
(Reuters) –

Mainland China has opened its first halfway house for Internet addicts, offering shell-shocked teenagers counseling, books—and the use of computers.

The shelter can hold four minors for one-night stays and help bridge gaps between children and parents, the Shanghai Daily said.

"None of the teenagers are forced to come here," the newspaper quoted Wang Hui, the house's chief social worker, as saying.

"We wander around in nearby Internet bars at night and bring them to the halfway house if the teen agrees." Computer and online gaming has exploded in China in recent years, with an estimated 14 million people taking part.

Amid growing concern that more and more young people are getting hooked, China has issued a raft of regulations aimed at curbing excessive game playing at Internet cafes and heavily fining owners that admit minors.

The Shanghai shelter, modeled on one already in operation Hong Kong, took in the first three boys on Monday, the paper said, including Chen Jiafeng—a 17-year old "fed up with the depressive atmosphere" of his family.

Chen went home after talking with a psychologist for four hours and after social workers visited his family to discuss proper parent-child communications, the paper said. In May, the parents of a 13-year-old boy who killed himself after playing a computer game for 36 hours sued the game's Chinese distributor.

AN INTERVIEW WITH AHMED BAHAR, PALESTINIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

By Motasem A Dalloul in Gaza
from an article/interview on www.aljazeera.net.

Ahmed Bahar, the former deputy and acting speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), considers the kidnapping of the Palestinian parliamentarians as well as an alleged assassination attempt against Ismail Haniya, the prime minister, part of a conspiracy to undermine the Hamas-led Palestinian government (PG).

a-J: In pursuing its policy of detaining Hamas and government officials, what message is the Israeli government sending the Palestinian people?

Ahmed Bahar: The main message is that they want to undermine the Palestinian political regime at both levels: The government and the PLC. They also want to humiliate Dweik, who they have put in a small dirty cell, as well as the Arabs and Muslims and all those who sympathize with them.

Despite strong condemnations and continuous contact with a lot of parliaments and parliamentarians, they are pursuing their policy as they clearly don't want a PG or a PLC.

The coincidence of the imprisonment of Dweik with the assassination attempt on Prime Minister Ismail Haniya shows that there is a previously manipulated plan to undermine the Palestinian regime.

What is the Palestinian government doing to secure the release of its officials in Israel jails?

We've conducted many demonstrations inside the country and abroad. We've called for demonstrations in Gaza and Ramallah, invited consuls and ambassadors, called human rights and Red Cross activists and so on.

We've sent more than 80 letters to Arab, Asian, and European parliaments in order to keep them abreast of the crimes of the Zionist state. We've organized a sit-in last week and many Arab speakers of parliaments spoke with us by telephone as well as some European parliamentarians.

We've sent letters to Arab foreign ministers but regrettably, they have discussed neither the letter nor any other Palestinian issue. We really feel deep sorrow for the Arab and Islamic silence toward the Palestinian issues.

Do you fear being seized by Israeli forces?

Yes, of course. The occupation troops may imprison or assassinate me because they want to disrupt the work of the PLC completely. If they take me away from the scene and remove second deputy speaker Hasan Khoraisha [not a member of Hamas] as well, the PLC will be formed by the second majority party and they can do whatsoever they want in the PLC and the government also.

Does the absence of about one-third of the PLC members affect it?

Of course. The absence of about 40 members from the Change and Reform bloc, a Hamas bloc in the PLC, affects the work of the parliament. But I assert that the performance of the parliament will continue regularly despite the absence of those members.

We are sure that the Israelis are implementing a well-constructed plan in order to undermine the work of the PLC as well as toppling the PG. But I want to tell them that if they want to undermine stability in the Palestinian political arena this time, they themselves will bear the responsibility for the instability and disorder that will surely follow and affect all the Middle East.

A big part of this plot is implemented by local Palestinian hands beside the Israeli and the American hands. In addition, Arab silence is considered a supportive factor for this conspiracy.

How has Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, reacted to these developments?

In fact, Mr Abbas sometimes adopts ambiguous positions. He issues decrees that hinder the work of the PG. For example, he has the ability to help alleviate the financial siege on the PA as he has the authority on the Palestinian Investment Fund and the Monetary Palestinian Fund which have billions of US dollars in their coffers.

He can facilitate the transfer of funds collected by the PG or the Arab League as the US and EU currently refuse to transfer monies except under his control. He doesn't act positively.

We should all be united against the Israeli siege on Palestine, but sometimes and unfortunately, we feel that his positions harm that national goal.

Israel has maintained a siege and crackdown on Palestinian territories after fighters in the Gaza Strip infiltrated southern Israel and captured an Israeli soldier. Are you working towards getting this siege lifted?

We have two bitter choices ahead of us: Either patience and vigilance, or submission.

But I think that we won't submit or make any change in our stance as this will be considered betraying the Palestinian voters who elected us and our political platform of national resistance to Israeli occupation. Our people who live in Palestine and practized resistance by their hands and lived long years under the Israeli occupation recognize clearly what such a program means. We are determined to follow this path.

Why won't you return Gilad Shalit to the Israelis?

Our key demands—the freeing of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails—have not been met.

Some Palestinian observers believe Israel will exchange the PLC officials for the safe return of Shalit. Do you see this as likely?

At first, I want to say that the Palestinian fighters captured the Israeli soldier from a tank; however, the Palestinian PLC members and ministers were kidnapped from their homes.

Their issue isn't related to Shalit at all, but it is a kind of pressure on the Palestinian people to abdicate their principles. Secondly, different mediators—such as our Egyptian brothers—spoke about the release of the soldier. I hope to reach a satisfactory deal. But, I say that any satisfactory and acceptable deal for Palestinians is to release a reasonable number of the prisoners in return of the Israeli soldier. I myself suggest the release of all the prisoners in the Israeli jails. Then, there will be no need for kidnappings of any Israelis.

Ismail Haniya has proposed dissolving the Palestinian Authority. Will this help in lifting the siege?

The PM asked only for discussing the gains of the existence of the PA in its current form, not for the dissolution of it. He has put the issue up for debate: How can we face this siege and whether this step would be a successful solution to the crisis or not. We believe the only solution is to form a national unity government; and we have started the discussion with other political parties in that regard.

But Abbas has said that George Bush, the US president, will not deal with any Palestinian government which contains members of Hamas.

I want to say to those who support the removal of Hamas from the government that Israel will one day want them out as well. If the Israelis want Hamas out today and place Fatah in power, tomorrow they will turn around and fight Fatah.

They themselves nominated Arafat for the Noble Prize, and then at the end they killed him. I want all sides to know clearly that the Israelis want ethnic cleansing for all Palestinians.

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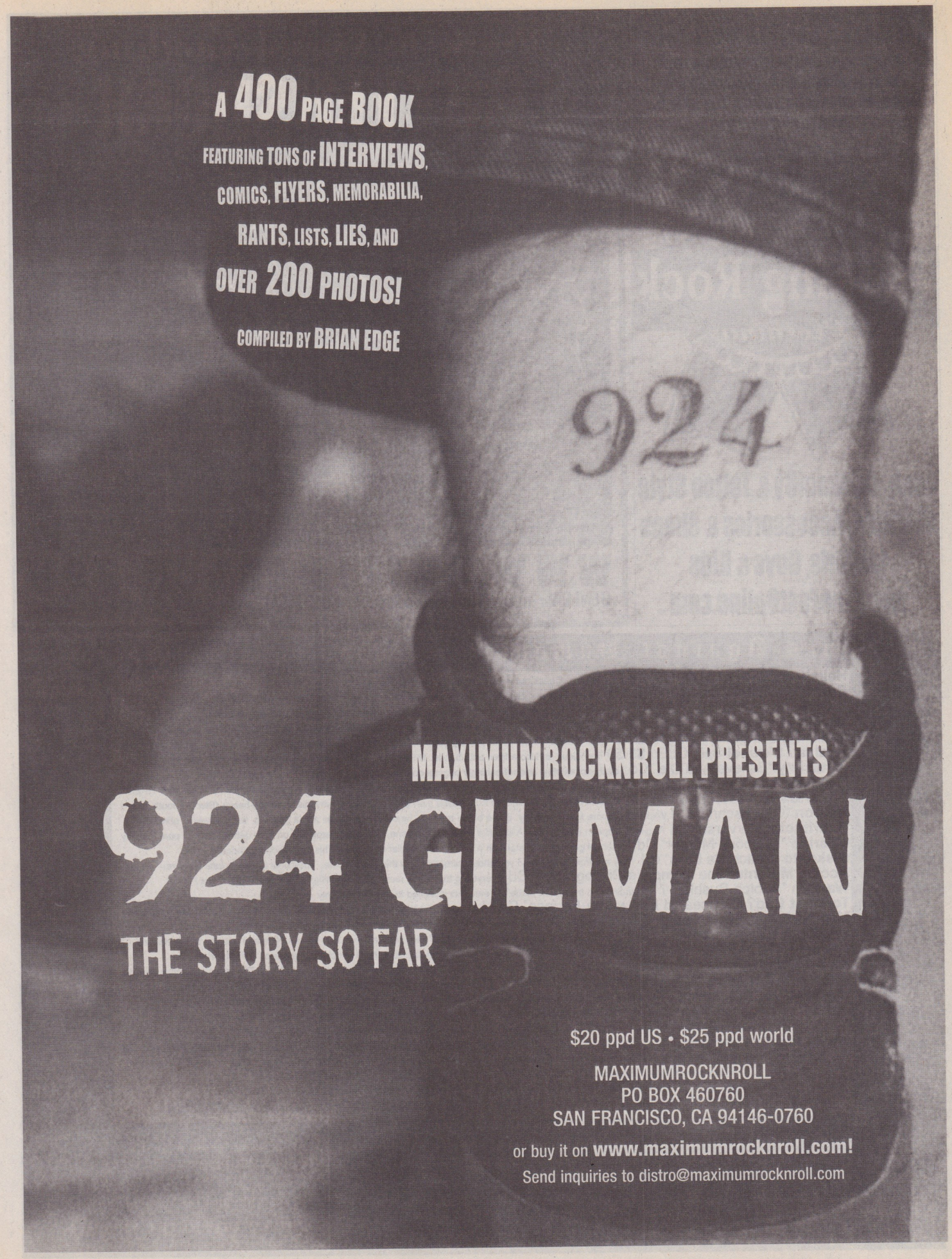
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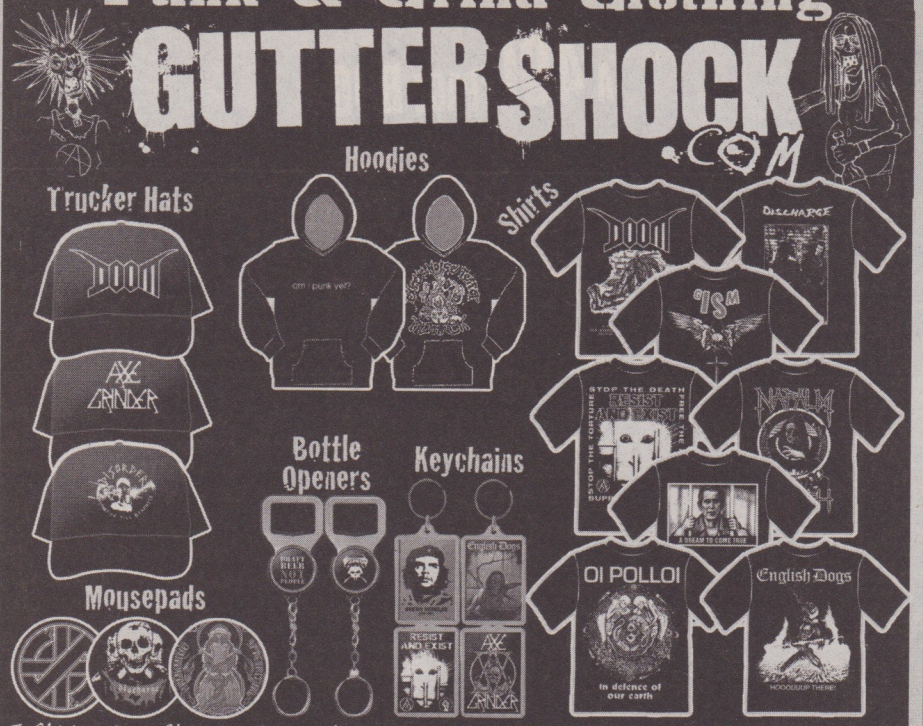

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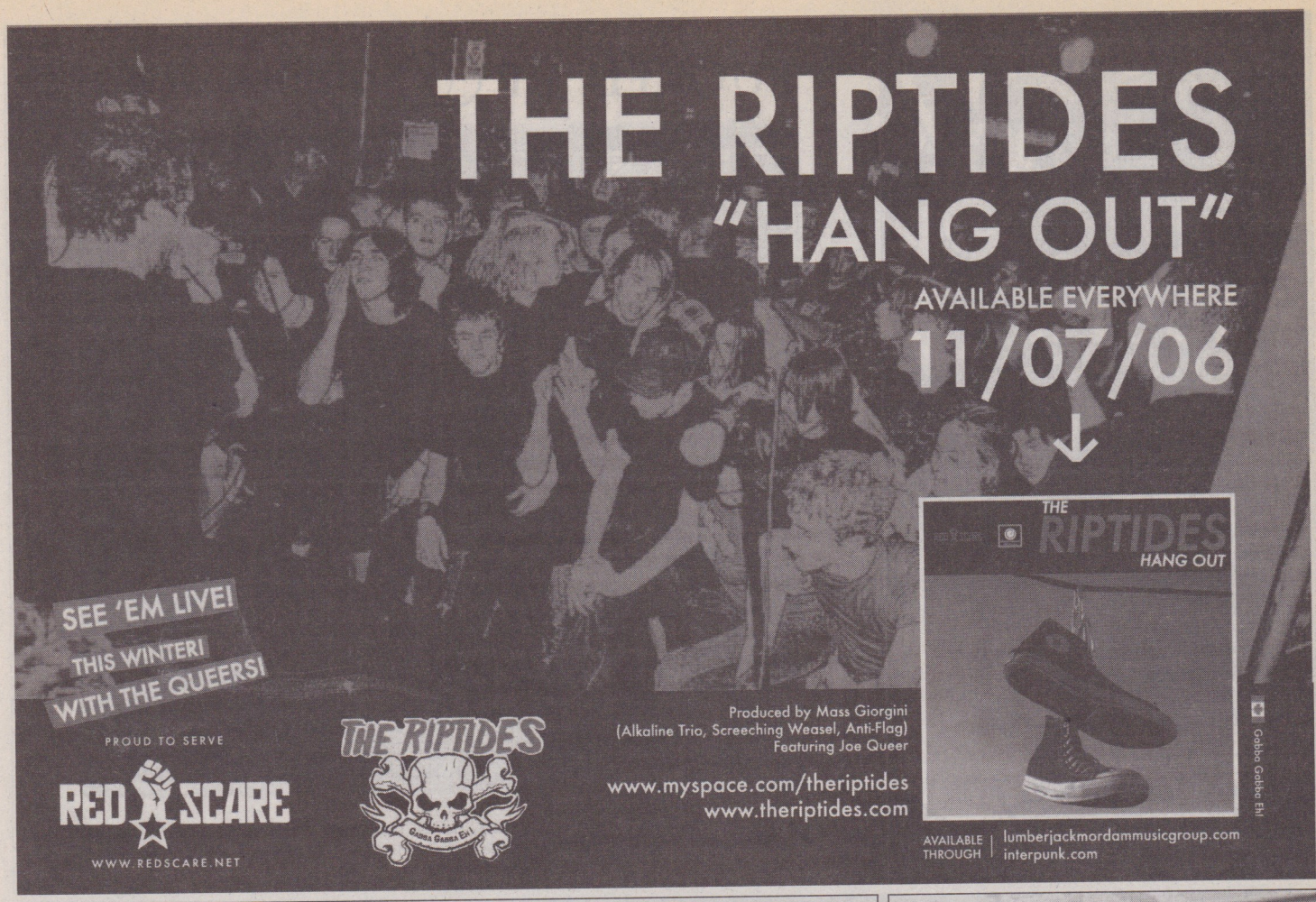

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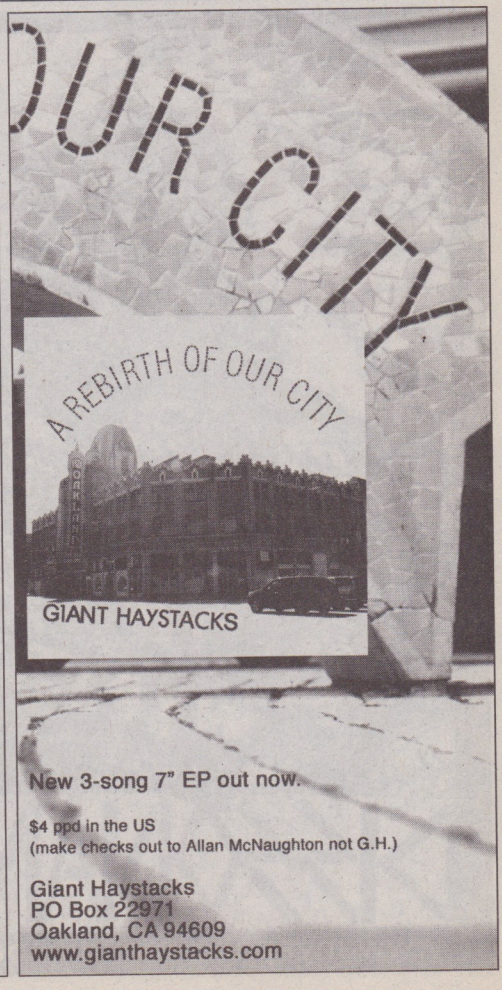

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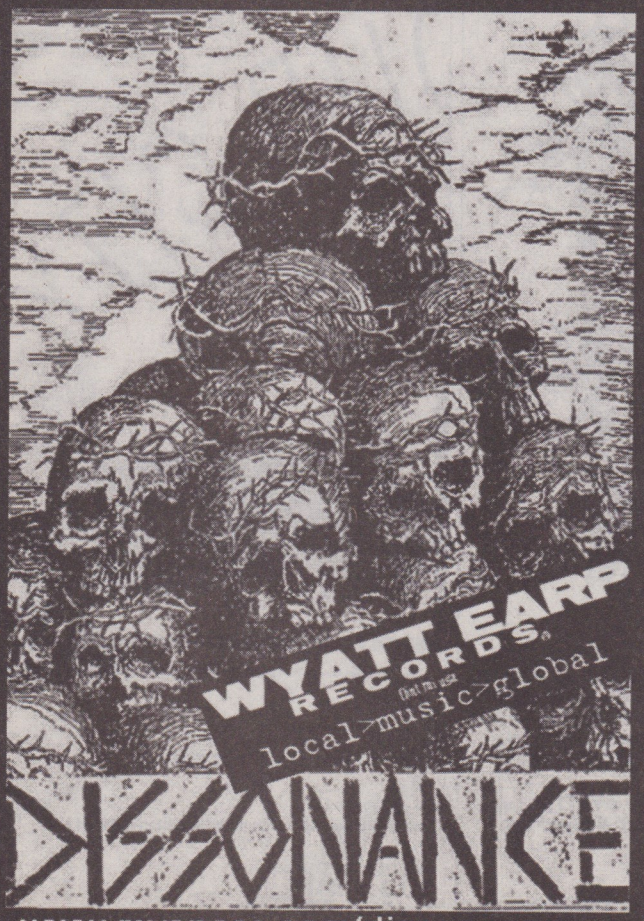

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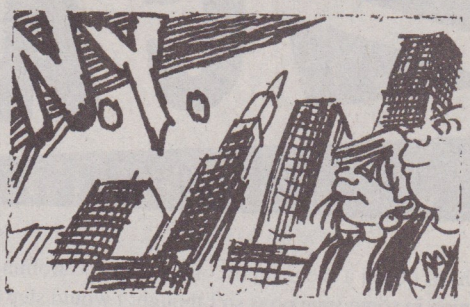

BY: AARON COMETBUS

Punk is alive and well in New York City, slightly faded and scratched but actually affordable—for the first time ever—for those of us two decades behind not just musically but also economically. Yes, the music that was second-hand at its inception is finally available at second-hand prices. Yard sales, still yielding the usual Linda Ronstadt/Fleetwood Mac fare on the West Coast, are here just as likely to feature records by **Bikini Kill**, **Blatz**, **Spitboy,** and **Struggle**—all for fifty cents. Aging and ex-punks make up about a quarter of the city's population, and they're on the move, from neighborhood to neighborhood, followed closely by real estate speculators, blazing a trail of gentrification and selling off seven-inches as they go. It's the only two-step the punks have left—blame **Fugazi**, who singlehandedly killed the pit on their 1988 tour and left nothing to fill the void. But I digresss.

Out on the street they sit, selling off baby-sized slices of their old vinyl, making room for that crib in their undersized apartments—or maybe they just need drug money, like me—but there's one thing old and punk that can't be sold, unfortunately, and that's tattoos, no matter how obscure, rare, or embarrassing they are. An informal survey around town shows the **Black Flag** bars neck in neck with the **Jawbreaker** TV aerial/Greek Orthodox Church thing, but the bars will soon take the lead if a certain pesky beard doesn't stay out of the bike lane on the Brooklyn Bridge! I've almost run him over twice, both close enough calls to see that he has not just one piece of Jawbreaker ink, but two! Another bearded Jawbreaker tattoo was spotted on the subway offering a toothless bum his leftover ribs. Whoops! Other embarrassing recent sightings were a **Crass** symbol (blurry) and a **Crimpshrine** butterfly. All the **DRI** thrashing guys have, apparently, been covered up by "something tribal."

Threadbare old punk shirts seen on the streets this summer include **Iron Cross**, **Toxic Reasons**, **Uniform Choice**, **A Priori**, and **Septic Death**. What a show that would make, eh? Or maybe not. I guess I'm happy to see the old records and shirts on the street and then go to the house show and see the new, local bands—it seems a perfect combination. However, you'll have to get someone else to report on the latter since my feelings for the scene these days are mostly just that: feelings. I may be beer-soaked and enthusiastically singing along but I probably don't know the words and am willfully ignorant of band names and such things as comprise a traditional scene report. More interesting to me is the way punk maintains a double life here—or is it one unbroken, fluid life? Sweating in the basement but also strolling out on the pavement and in the park. It stretches across neighborhoods and across cultural and generational lines in ways I haven't seen anywhere else. It ages well, and at the same time is made new by every new kid who claims it. For what more could you ask? In New York, if Grandpa isn't sporting a **Ramones** shirt, it's only because it no longer fits—he's lost that paunch at the gym.

As an example, take the old, bearded bookseller on Eighth Avenue. Looking over his stock today, I saw, peeking out from behind Michelle Cliff and Ivan Klima, an original, silkscreened poster for Boston legends **Unnatural Axe**! I just about fainted on the spot. "You're the fifth person who's done that today," laughed the bookseller, seeing my eyes open wide. "A lot of people were part of that time and place and have strong feelings for it." *A lot of people??* That was crazy. Unnatural Axe might be legendary, but they're also right at the pinnacle of punk obscurity—and that's pretty damn obscure! Anywhere but here, at least, among people shopping for used books on the street—people like me. "Sorry, it's not for sale," the guy smiled. "Just for display. It's from my private collection."

I rest my case.

Aaron Cometbus. NYC August 2006

P.S.: #50 out now.

NORTH CAROLINA

There hasn't been a scene report on the North Carolina scene in this magazine in some time now, so I thought I would step up to the plate and tell the punk rock world about all of the great things that are happening here at the moment. Like the rest of the world it seems North Carolina is in the midst of a hardcore renaissance. Any of the old-timers will tell you that this is the most exciting time for hardcore in this part of the country since bands like CORROSION OF CONFORMITY and SUBCULTURE roamed the state some twenty years ago.

First, though, a word about the general vibe in NC: there are three things that make North Carolina's scene really unique. First, many (if not most) people have an intense, almost scholarly interest in hardcore and its history. Perhaps it's because there are not a *gazillion* shows every week to spend our money on. Or perhaps it's a side-effect of having three major universities in the Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill triangle, but just about everyone I know has a killer collection of old vinyl. Secondly, we know how to party. I grew up in Virginia where the straight-edge scene dominated hardcore and I can say without question that the *hard-drinkin' rednecks* in NC have *a lot* more fun. Finally, our innate sense of southern hospitality means that no one is ever without a beer in his or her hand. In short, if your band makes a stop in Raleigh or Durham we can promise you a great time. If you need proof just ask bands like STRUNG UP, PEDESTRIANS, THE HOLY MOUNTAIN, BARONESS, MUNICIPAL WASTE and RAT BYTE, all of who have played here in the past few years and had a great time.

Venues

If I had to hand out credit for all of the great things happening in North Carolina right now Chaz Martenstein and Hank Williams (yes, that's his real name!) deserve the lion's share of the credit. Two or three years ago Hank started putting on shows in his house, affectionately dubbed the "Thrashatorium." Since there was barely a scene to speak of when Hank started doing shows things started slow, but last summer it wasn't uncommon to have 75 kids at a show, all of them drunk as hell and ready to circle pit. I feel bad for Hank's roommate Jason Griggs who had the unenviable task of mopping the footprints off the ceiling at every show.

Unfortunately eviction papers were served at the old Thrashatorium location earlier this summer, but Hank has stepped it up and began booking bigger shows. His main venue of choice right now is the bar King's in downtown Raleigh. While things aren't as over-the-top crazy as they were at the house, people still come out and get wild for the King's shows. Word on the street is that THE HOLY MOUNTAIN was still talking about their Raleigh show weeks later. If you want to talk to Hank about booking your band the best way to get in touch with him is through his MySpace page: www.myspace.com/hardcorhank.

Hank has also been booking some shows at the new Bull City Records in Durham. BCR's proprietor, Chaz, moved here from Colorado last year and his store has been open for about seven months at the time of this writing. In addition to the room that houses his store, Chaz also has access to the large, vacant room next door and that's where the bands set up. It has the crazy vibe of a house show (the no-alcohol policy is, by design, not strictly enforced) but the likelihood of getting busted is far lower. Chaz has a policy of making his shows donation-only, but we're pretty aggressive with the pass-the-hat. When Chicago's PEDESTRIANS played here a few weeks ago we were able to give them more many than any other stop on their tour save their show at Re:generation in Boston.

While those are our two main venues for underground hardcore shows there are occasionally shows at other bars and clubs in the area. Most people know about the Chapel Hill area's famous indie rock scene so there are tons of tiny, hole-in-the-wall clubs but they don't often have hardcore shows. Occasionally the Cat's Cradle will host a bigger band or package tour (THE ADOLESCENTS are playing there in July) and other clubs like Local 506 and the Wetlands in Chapel Hill, 305 South in Durham, and Slim's in Raleigh will also have shows on occasion. If a last-ditch venue is needed the Nightlight (which is a used bookstore by day) in Chapel Hill will work; they will book literally anything, they have $1.25 PBR's and give the bands 100% of the door money, but turnout is generally poor.

Bands

In terms of bands, North Carolina's favorite sons are, without a doubt, DIRECT CONTROL. Though the band didn't really get off the ground until Brandon and Mike moved to Richmond, all three of the members are from our part of North Carolina and they usually make the three-hour drive down from Richmond for the bigger shows. DC's drummer, Mike, just moved to Wilmington, NC so maybe we can start calling them a North Carolina band now! http://www.deepfrybonanza.com/directcontrol/

The other band from here that you might have heard of is CRIMSON SPECTRE from Greensboro. They play fast, metallic hardcore with screamy vocals and have records out on Magic Bullet Records of Virginia, including a recent split with Greensboro eco-punks UWHARRIA. They tour the east coast frequently and make the hour-long drive from Greensboro to Raleigh a few times a year. Now if only we could convince them to start doing their ACCUSED

cover again! www.slavemagazine.com/crimsonspectre

My personal favorite local band at the moment is Raleigh's DOUBLE NEGATIVE. The story behind this band is great. The four members have all been into hardcore since the COC days: drummer Brian Walsby played drums in Nardcore band SCARED STRAIGHT before he moved here from California, singer Kevin Collins used to handle the vocals in SUBCULTURE and guitarist Scott Williams has a photo of himself skanking across the stage at a FAITH show on his MySpace page. After seeing a roof-shaking show with GOVERNMENT WARNING at the Thrashatorium they decided to form a fast hardcore band and get back in the game. The racket they make is the very definition of unholy, sounding like the perfect mix of *Animosity*-era COC and *Why*-era DISCHARGE. When they play I feel like I've been transported back to 1983. For now the only way to hear them is their MySpace page (www.myspace.com/thedoublenegative), but they'll be recording soon with Mike Dean of COC and I can't imagine the result will be anything but perfect.

Our other prized possessions in Raleigh are the STREET SHARKS who may well be the hardest partiers in the land. They play fast, early '80s-style hardcore with the slightest hint of DILLINGER FOUR-esque poppiness. They recently released a demo to narrowspread acclaim, and if you let them on the bill at your show the whole scene is likely to be mobbed by screaming girls, BEATLES-style. Also, if you run into these guys make sure and bug them for a copy of the MEDIA CIRCUS demo, which was Dennis and Joel's old band that tried to rip off the DICKS and the BIG BOYS. Unfortunately STREET SHARKS are on hiatus until August while Joel does some kind of math nerd internship in Texas, but while he's gone the other three members are starting a yet-to-be-named side project that reportedly ups the pop quotient even higher. They played their debut show with the MARKED MEN at Chaz's in August.

Another band falling into the old man department is Durham's CHEST PAINS, who were born after singer/bassist Greg Barbera experienced heart attack-like symptoms after overdosing on Sudafed a few years ago. Greg grew up in DC in the early '80s and will regale you with tales of seeing VOID and MINOR THREAT if you ask nicely. While the CHEST PAINS cover CIRCLE JERKS and GOVERNMENT ISSUE their own music is more of the FLIPPER/FANG/later BLACK FLAG variety. A lot of people describe them as sounding like a long-lost SST band and that description fits nicely.

GORMAN STREET SLUTS is a Raleigh-area band that has been playing around town f11or a few years now. They play a more UK82-style of punk with big choruses, but you can tell the local penchant for early '80s-style-US stuff is rubbing off on them as well. GSS has also opened their house up for a few shows this summer, including a scorcher with Connecticuit's RAT BYTE. Here's hoping we hear more from these guys in the future.

CONCRETE BOMBERS are a fairly new band from Raleigh, though they've gotten an amazing amount of shows under their belt so far this summer. Each of their songs seems to mine a different style of punk and hardcore, but their main influences seem to be rocking UK stuff like GBH and 625 Records-style fastcore.

DESTROYED TRADITION is a young band from Raleigh who is influenced by street punk bands like the CASUALTIES and DEFIANCE. Personally I hate those bands but I think DESTROYED TRADITION is actually better than their influences. You can hear them on their MySpace page at www.myspace.com/destroyedtradition.

Finally, my own band is called CROSS LAWS and we're a three-

piece that tries our best to ape *Record Collectors*-era POISON IDEA and other comparable '83 style US hardcore.

I've tried to list the bands that might be interesting to *MRR*'s readers, but rest assured there are about 47 squillion indie-rock, metal, bluegrass, etc. bands in this area, though if you're interested in learning about them I'd say you're reading the wrong magazine.

Stores, Distros, Labels, Etc.

The current hub of the scene is undoubtedly Bull City Records in Durham. Chaz stocks all the latest essential fare and for an area as provincial as ours gets some pretty damn amazing vinyl making its way through his used bins. Chaz is down in pretty much every way that a record store owner could be. Thank god for Chaz.

There are also a few other record stores in the area worth mentioning. CD Alley in Chapel Hill stocks some hardcore and garage rock, and despite their name about half of their stock is vinyl. Nice Price Records and Books has locations in Chapel Hill and Raleigh and while their stock is composed entirely of used stuff it's not unusual to find a keeper in their bins. Schoolkids Records also has locations in Chapel Hill and Raleigh, though their stock is a little more of the *Pitchfork* variety. If you're lucky Street Shark Rich Ivey will be manning the counter when you visit the Raleigh location.

I only know of two labels currently operating in this area. Will Butler from Raleigh runs a label called To Live a Lie Records. He is mostly into fastcore and power violence though he likes some hardcore too, and he's released records by bands like MAGRUDERGRIND and I OBJECT! Will also runs a small distro that carries comparable stuff.

I also run a label called Sorry State Records. My first release was the *Nuclear Tomorrow* EP by DIRECT CONTROL and my next two releases are reissues by the great Tennessee band KORO. Early next year I'm planning on releasing some NC-related material including the long-lost second demo from SUBCULTURE (which blows their LP out of the water and will be a split release with No Way Records from Virginia) and a compilation of North Carolina hardcore bands tentatively titled *Why Are We Still Here?* In addition to the label I also run a small distro that stocks early '80s-style hardcore.

I can't write a North Carolina scene report without mentioning Chris Hardy and the legendary Velted Regnub Distro. Chris lives all the way out in New Bern and he doesn't have a car so he doesn't get out much. But when there's a show in Greenville—AKA Bucktown for you DIRECT CONTROL fans—you'll see him there with a small box of records, but his entire distro is a total behemoth. Just about everything you can think of runs through his hands, including all of the hard-to-get bootlegs from Europe. He has a web site at www.veltedregnub.com but like most people these days Chris dispenses most of his information through his MySpace page at www.myspace.com/veltedregnub.

I think that's all for our humble part of the country. Also, I'd like to note that in addition to writing sweet scene reports, releasing ripping records, and playing in a crushing hardcore band I also have a blog at www.deadmetaphor.com where I post photos and videos from just about all of the shows that happen around here and keep a calendar of upcoming shows. If you're interested in keeping up with what's happening in these parts that's the best place on the internet to start.

Thanks, Daniel Lupton.

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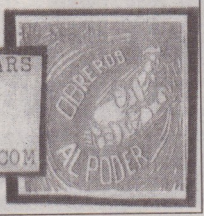

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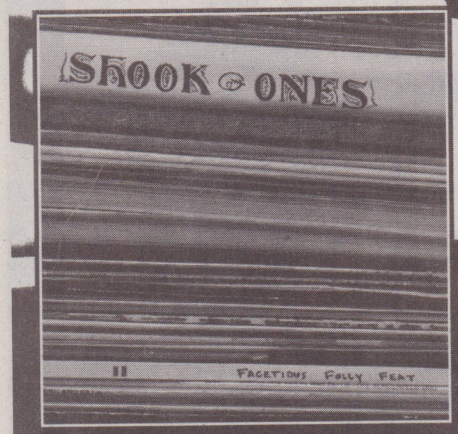

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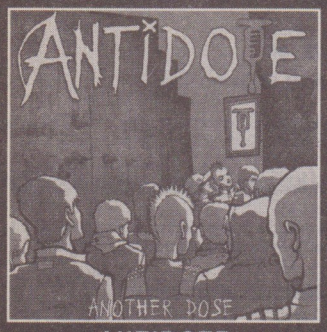

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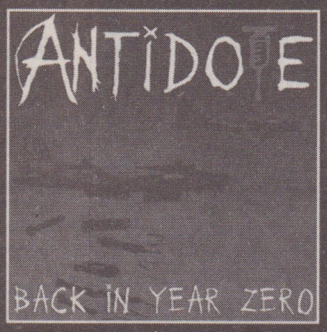

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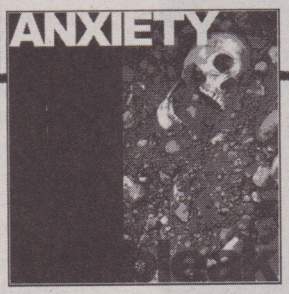

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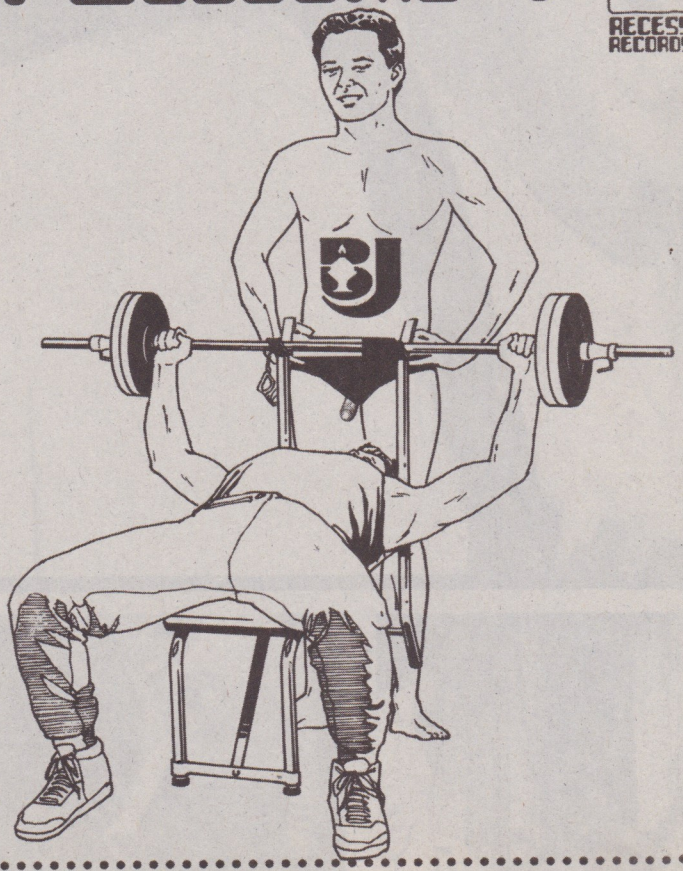
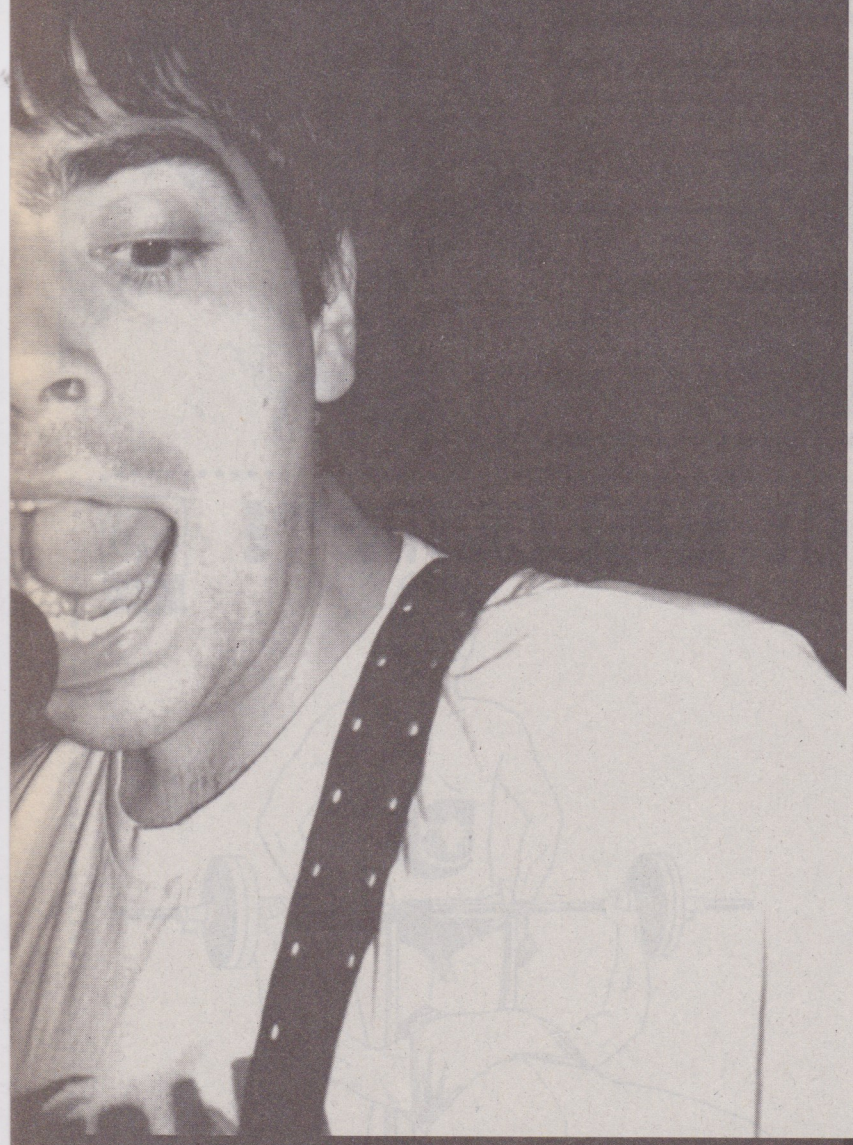


THE FEELERS

J. G.: guitar
Aleks Red Menace: guitar
Prof. Dan Feelings: vocals
Joe T.: bass
Joey Thunderguns: drums



You are about to read one of several failed interview attempts that I've conducted with The Feelers, the pride (yeah...right...) and joy (sneer) of Columbus, Ohio. Our first step toward The Dark Side was taken just over a year ago, during the band's first San Francisco show at Thee Parkside. After their set, all parties agreed that the interview should be postponed in the interest of national security, local sodomy laws, and good taste. Translation: they got too drunk. A shame really, since their self-released debut, *Fuhrer's New Miniskirt, and their LP on Dead Beat, Learn To Hate The Feelers, had made them the bee's knees at that time. Thankfully, they've managed to keep it up with a string of killer records, most notably with their latest 7" EP on Contaminated Records. When I got wind of their upcoming trip out west, I had one thing on my mind: REMATCH! Not wanting to stack the deck too heavily in my favor, I suggested that the interview take place in a bar, well into their five-week tour, immediately prior to their Oakland show at The Stork Club. Hey, it seemed like a good idea at the time... Interview/Recipe For Disaster by Mitch Cardwell. Photos by Ryan Miyashiro and Icki*

MRR: So I don't have any questions for you.

J.G.: Let's just grab a circle table and ask each other questions.

Thunderguns: Jon's waaaaaasted right now…

Aleks: The tape's rolling…

J.G.: Are we discussing something important here?

Aleks: So Mitch…how did you get into The Feelers?

MRR: I met you in Chicago. You were pretty drunk and you gave me your record.

J.G.: What happened in the hotel room afterwards though?

Aleks: No…

J.G.: Oh, we're not getting to that point yet?

Aleks: Then a week after I met you, there was a post you wrote on a message board about the record. I still go back to that and jerk off. Wait, sorry. Masturbate.

MRR: This is going well. Are you pissed that the interview didn't happen last time?

J.G.: If you want, we can start the interview over again. I mean, if you want. I wouldn't. C'mon…this is good material.

Aleks: This is gonna take us straight to the top.

J.G.: Wait, let's be political. JFK and Martin Luther King. Are they dead? Do you believe they're dead? I don't know. I'm not buyin' it.

(Feelings and Thunderguns leave disgusted)

Where you guys going? Oh well. Just so you know, I'm normally a sober powerhouse. I'm the Donald Trump of soberness.

MRR: Do you really want this to be the interview?

Aleks: Are we having an interview?

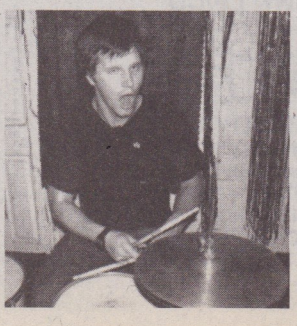
J.G.: I thought we were just talking. We have this history of interviews not working out. We should try and stuff.

MRR: How long have you guys been together?

All: Booo!!!!!!

Aleks: That's the suckiest question ever! Three and a half years.

MRR: And how long had you been playing together before you made *Fuhrer's New Miniskirt*?



J.G.: Too long! Actually, we started at same time as The 4-Skins. It was really important to us that skinheads were represented in the scene. You know? There's one law for them and another law for us. We're just trying to represent.

MRR: Has being the critical darlings of the skinhead scene translated to financial success?

J.G.: Well, when we were on the Beaches soundtrack....wait. I don't wanna say that. Although critical success does equal Bette Midler. That's just kinda the way it rolls. Simple math.

Aleks: Mitch, just for the record, you bought the beer.

(I attempt to end interview)

J.G.: Wait! Don't pack up. This is good shit!

MRR: Fuck. OK. So you guys have a new member, Joe T. of THE RAT TRAPS. Joe, when did you join?

Aleks: Joe's been in the...

MRR: Is your name Joe?

Joe: ...A couple months.

J.G.: Shut up!!! It's one of those things. He's been in the band the whole time, only no one knew... including us.

Aleks: We were all born in this band.

MRR: You moved from Tennessee to Ohio...or...???

J.G.: Pffft. Bowel movement...

MRR: This isn't working.

J.G.: Look, I've read some of your other interviews, Mitch. This is pure gold. Like that Catholic Boys interview...

Aleks: We're actually going to cover one of their songs tonight.

MRR: Do you wanna cover their interview?

J.G.: No. We can't pretend to be that cool. I had breakfast, lunch, and dinner at The Lusty Lady in San Francisco today. (Yelling at other bar patrons) Do you guys have any questions for us? Ask any question...

Aleks: He usually takes medicine to suppress this.

MRR: When is your new record coming out?

J.G.: Ha ha ha! Next question!

MRR: During your show the other night, someone mentioned that they were sick and tired of you guys being considered a punk band rather than a hardcore band. Care to intelligently expound on that observation?

Joe: I would love to be thought of as a hardcore band!

J.G.: Joe is so hardcore. Whatever. It's all the same shit.

Aleks: When we write songs... wait. When we "jam"...

J.G.: No! Really, it's all the same shit. It's all just bad music that square people don't dig.

Aleks: I don't understand why people call us a garage band. I've never even played in a garage.

J.G.: It's a style of pants. We're actually art-crust.

MRR: Why did you guys name your van "Vanowar"?

Aleks: We didn't. It was already named that by the band we got it from, Satan's War Boner.

MRR: Satan's War Boner???!!

Aleks: That's not a joke at all.

J.G.: Hey, remember that one time we talked about the van? Oh wait, Mitch...you're still here?

MRR: How important is MySpace and text messaging to The Feelers?

J.G.: It's actually been quite helpful in terms of getting a hold off...

MRR: You are actually going to seriously answer this question??

J.G.: Well, I was. But you ruined it.

(J.G. pours a glass of beer on the tape recorder)

www.apt103.net/feelers

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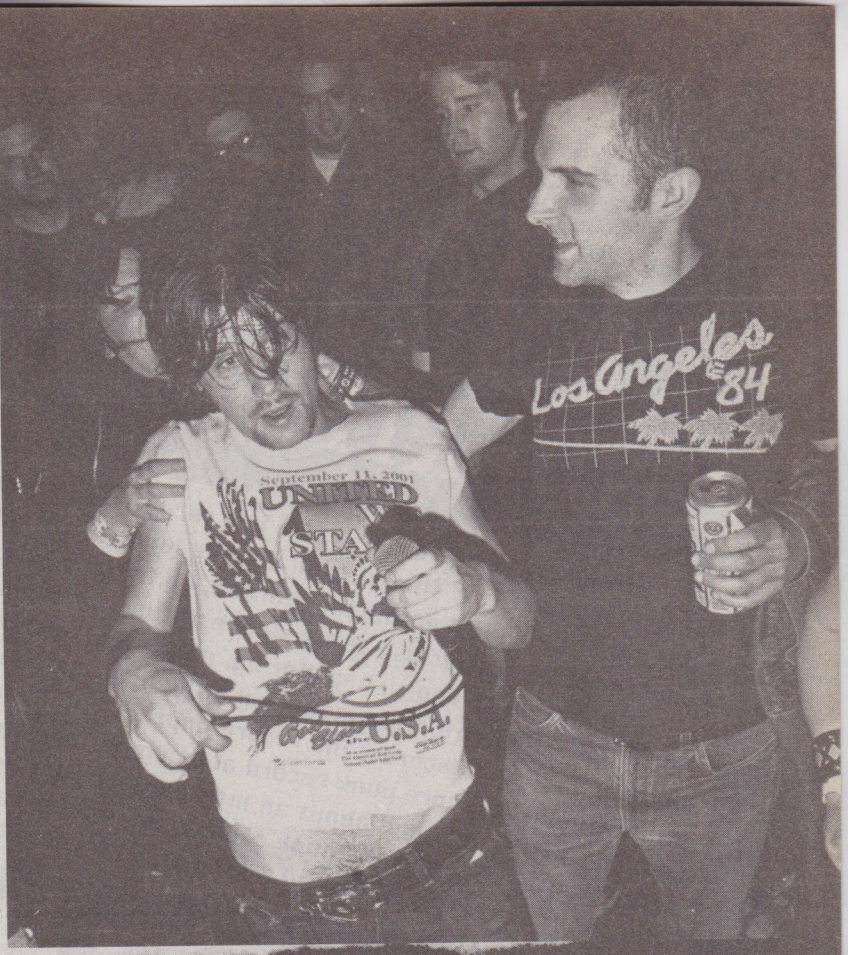
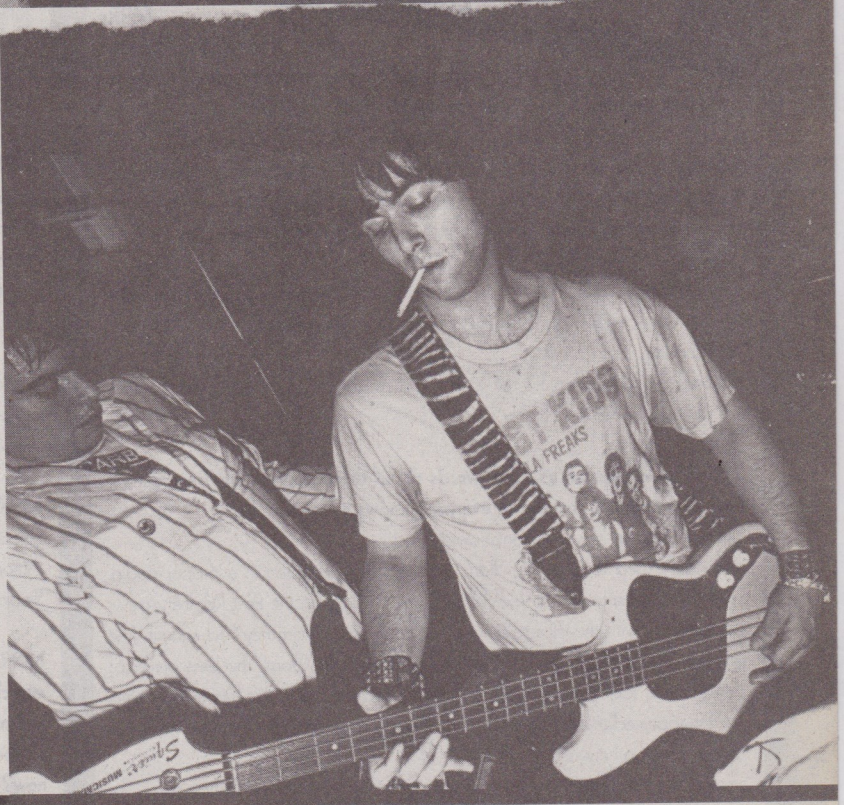




PESD
POST EXTREME STRESS DISORDER

Post Extreme Stress Disorder (PESD) is a recent studio project from Amoniak, singer of Poland's legendary Tragiedia, and Smoku from equally legendary Post Regiment. I had the pleasure of reviewing their debut CD, Politikarepoizonekurvae, on Trujaca Fala for MRR. In a time where a lot of hardcore plays conservatively close to its sleeves, I was so completely blown away by the CD's forward-thinking combination of angry, hammering, old-style Polish hardcore and a hard-to-pin-down modern Killing Joke/Ministry style industrial influence, that I arranged to issue the record here in the States on vinyl on Prank Records. The record impressively treads the fine line between classic sounding international hardcore punk record and completely angling from a new direction. Filip From Trujaca Fala contacted the band about an interview discussing the process of their music, the current Polish political situation, and the punk scene past and present. Introduction by Ken Sanderson. Interview by Filip and Magda. Translation by Nika. Photos by Magda.

MRR: How did PESD begin? Why, while you had played before with live bands, did you decided to create an exclusively studio project?

Amoniak: While recording Post Regiment's last LP, we realized that we liked working together. We came up with the genius idea that all the others should get off our backs and not disturb us—we will have a two-piece band. Later, we will possibly admit some crew.

Smoku: We had conditions to do it at home, and it's much easier to work alone or with two people only. Even better with two people, because you have two brains to use.

Amoniak: In my opinion, it's the ideal condition for creating music. And the control of stupid ideas is the other one.

MRR: Could you tell us a few words about the history of the Tragiedia wg Post Regiment LP, 'cause not everyone knows it.

Smoku: Tragiedia, it was Amoniak's old band.

Amoniak: I used to sing. We didn't have anything recorded in a proper studio. Then the band split up, people did different things. With the Post Regiment crew, we came up with the idea to record Tragiedia's stuff. Then they had enough free time, so we sat down—all of Post Regiment, me and Goryl, the bass player of Tragiedia and some partying backing singers—and we did it. We had a good time. Then it appeared that Smok and me could work together perfectly, which was not easy to prove otherwise.

Smoku: We had access to a professional studio. We spent a lot of time there.

MRR: Now, we cannot escape the question about your musical past.

Smoku: I started in the higher secondary school. [Laughter.] Yes, no kidding. First was the band Pandora, then Klub Szeciu Konfidentów, then Post Regiment—half of my life, maybe more. In between I did some other projects: Falarek Band and some reggae/dub productions.

Amoniak: I played only in Tragiedia, some 20-25 years ago. You know—we play fast and there is nothing more to add. Then there was that project with Post Regiment. Sometimes I brought round some lyrics when their inspiration was gone.

Smoku: The history of Post Regiment and Tragiedia is almost inseparable. We had common beginnings. At the turn of the '80s and '90s, we played most of the gigs together, until Tragiedia split up. We used to live at the same estate.

MRR: How did you encounter punk rock? First gig, first record? How did it begin?

Amoniak: When I was 13 or 14, the first music I started to listen to was punk rock. It started typically with the Sex Pistols, then it was instantly high gear, i.e. Discharge and that type. It was a shitty time for gigs in Poland. The bigger ones I remember, like UK Subs. Later more developed. The '90s were beautiful, a lot of things happened, and then it all strangely ended.

Smoku: For me it was much the same. The same country, the same crew, the same estate. I think that the first band I listened to might have been 999. And the first gig was also UK Subs.

MRR: And how old are you?

Smoku: I'm 36.

Amoniak: 40.

Smoku: And the year is 2006.

MRR: Being involved in the punk scene for so many years, have you spotted any changes during that time? Can you compare the scene in communist times and now? In the '80s, playing punk rock was connected with taking a firm stand on the system and reality. Do you think there is still such radicalism in punk rock now?

Smoku: I think that on that subject, nothing has changed. They changed the system but it doesn't mean that we have a better life now. Maybe I am going through a middle age crisis right now, but I am fucking suffering. It seemed impossible then, that we would live to see the times we are going through in this fucking country. Talking about the scene, the breeding ground is still the same. I'm not sure if it isn't even harder now than before. The Western models reached Poland and it is noticeable. There were better and worse moments on scene, different things happened, lots of gigs, lots of

crews acting vigorously. There were some lethargic moments too—you know, it happens fluently. I think that a lot of good stuff is going on now.

Amoniak: Generally, you have just said everything I think about that. The basis of punk rock was always the negation of that bullshit, which is happening around us. Everywhere is the same—everything crashes into some bullshit. There was a period when it was cool, and then everything got fucked, died. A lot of trash arose that wanted to be called punk rock in the first half of the '90s. People were not involved in the movement. It was just a fashion and money made out of it. Everything that a man created, another man can sell, and it applies to punk too. It's evident now, when lots of poor bands split up, but those that survive dwell upon interesting subjects. Those who survived are still doing their job.

MRR: What do you think about the condition of the Polish scene today, in regards to music? Are there any new bands that capture your attention? On the other hand, what do you think about the "sentimental journeys" that are very fashionable nowadays, and reviving the old bands: Armia playing their old songs again and getting ready to reactivate Siekiera. The Jarocin Festival's come back in the punk's formula.

Amoniak: I'm glad that something is going on. I don't listen to music because I don't want my brain to get reordered. I could unwillingly start to copy something—I am sensitive. The beginning of the '90s was nice, after the '80s, when it was difficult to play anywhere, other than some strange little clubs, schools.

Smoku: Generally, they were nice times—gigs at schools.

Amoniak: On the one hand, yeah, but on the other it was shitty, because it wasn't professional; there was no equipment or anything. We only wanted to do any move, to do anything. Such things are tiring.

Smoku: There were lots of people showing up by accident, and that wasn't bad.

Amoniak: I'm not saying it was bad, but a little bit childish. Later, it became more concrete, more hardcore crews appeared, tight and strong, that were doing things on the basis of the famous DIY. I cannot entirely believe that all was so beautiful and nice, but something was going on. And reactivating the old bands? Good for them, they all should reactivate, their second youth.

MRR: And what about those new bands?

Amoniak: Lately, I haven't been excited about anything in Poland. Antidotum is not bad (are they hiding somewhere or what?), Moenster—so be it, it's cool, but it's not a Polish band.

Smoku: Moenster, El Banda—but I'm not sure if it's not simply the liking. I think that Antidotum is a good band but still underestimated. They used to have their time and now I have the impression that they have faded a bit.

Amoniak: They are unlucky; life is simply getting to them. Suddenly, it appears that you cannot do what you like.

MRR: The sound of your record is rooted in the unique sound of Polish punk of the '80s, that specific blend of punk rock and new wave, to evoke only the name of Siekiera. Would you agree? Was it a planned strategy? The music of PESD is much darker than Post Regiment. Were there any bands that inspired you?

Smoku: The material has been coming into being for a very long time. The sound was only the effect of what we could wring out of the equipment we recorded on because, I repeat again, it was done at home.

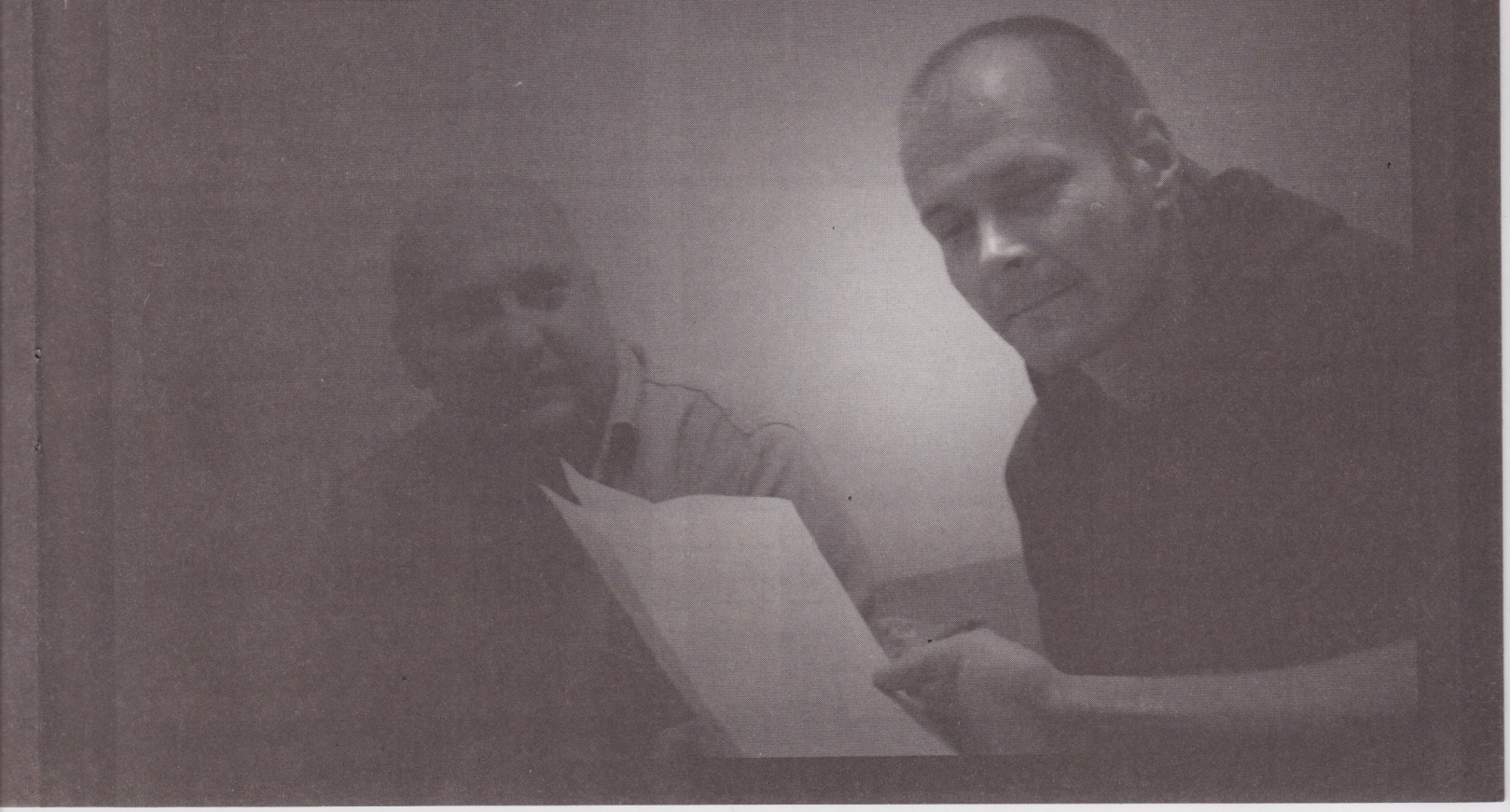
Amoniak: The vocals, the bass and parts of guitar were recorded in the studio, piece by piece, and some part was recorded at home, because we didn't have to fool around. Everything depended on circumstances. When we could do it in the studio, we did it. When we couldn't, we did it at home.

Smoku: And the association with Siekiera is maybe because of the drum machine.

Amoniak: In my opinion, it's a complete coincidence. Maybe the timbre, my screams. We didn't mean that. It happened, and that's all.

MRR: Studio projects are not very common in punk rock. How long did it take you to prepare the record and what was the division of duties?

Amoniak: Smok deals with all the computers. He knows them, it's his profession. Before I learned all that, we would be gray all over. So, Smok did all that stuff—the mastering and mixes. We did



the tunes together, variously. Sometimes Smok brought over some beat and we adjusted some lyrics to it. Some music I created for the text and Smok did some rearrangements later.

Smoku: Or first it was any beat, Amoniak's vocals, and later the music was created, and it could all change. That was interesting. And then we could record the vocals again, more concretely.

MRR: So, it all was created piece by piece. How long did it take you?

Smoku: The whole cycle lasted about two or three years. But with breaks, there were different periods. The hottest were a certain two to three months when we were meeting each other every Saturday and Sunday.

Amoniak: But sometimes it happened that we had several months off. It depended on life's skid and failures.

Smoku: From the moment of finishing the recording until the final product, a year passed.

Amoniak: And the mere idea has rested for two years because we were busy.

Smoku: We recorded the first tune for our mate's birthday.

Amoniak: Oh, kurvae, it means, "I don't remember."

MRR: You plan to create a live version of the band. When will that happen and how are you going to manage with translating that studio project with all its effects into live musicians?

Amoniak: Don't you worry about that.

Smoku: There's an idea to partially use some tunes played from machines and a live person would mix them as well as the vocals. To do it a bit in a sound system way, with live drums, guitars and vocals, all mixed on stage. We have some sort of idea for the lineup but when we start depends on my working conditions. I work three shifts now and when it ends we will strike.

MRR: Where does the name come from? Why is it in English? Why is "post" used in the name again?

Amoniak: Gosh! It has nothing in common with Post Regiment. Post Extreme Stress Disorder (PESD) is a rearrangement of the name PTSD, an illness that soldiers suffered from during World War I. Because of the bombing, shelling and other stuff, they were so fucked up that they couldn't sit still in a chair. I watched a documentary about it and it crossed my mind that life is fucked not necessarily during the war, and that you can have some cool disorder, meaning disturbance, inside. I didn't want to copy the clinical name, so I changed it into PESD. And it sounds so hideous in Polish that it's almost impossible to utter. And why is it English? In Poland there is no reasonable equivalent for it. A short word with one syllable: when life is fucked up, you have PESD.

I USED TO NOT CARE ABOUT POLITICS, I WASN'T INTERESTED IN IT, BUT I THINK THE LONGER I LIVE, THE MORE IT HAUNTS ME. I THINK ABOUT IT MORE AND TALK ABOUT IT.

MRR: Why did you put on the cover a picture of a hyena consuming a human's corpse? Is it connected with the song "Hieny" ("Hyenas") or with the whole record?

Amoniak: It's an illustration for the title of the record, Politikarepoisonekurvae. It is to depict the way politicians work. They push people into strange war parties and they feed on that. It's a really short story, no exaggerated philosophy. A hyena devouring a soldier's corpse—lately, we have been involved in some war, so you can also relate the cover to it.

MRR: The title song is about corrupted and unpunished politicians, which is unfortunately political reality in our country. Did the people, after the downfall of the communist regime, really think that the election would have any meaning and could lead to any changes for the better? How do you assess what is happening in Polish politics now?

Smoku: I think that everyone who survived the communists was pleased that it ended. They didn't give us passports, didn't let us listen to Western music, allowed only politically correct propaganda films and so on. Everybody found themselves a safe tunnel in that reality and survived somehow, for better or worse, but for everyone the gate opened and so did the hope. I think people who had known the West before didn't expect much better changes. The new system gave us passports and let us buy records, but it appeared that if you wanted to buy a record you needed money for it, and that's a trap.

Amoniak: Everybody hoped that something would change but it appeared that all politicians are fucks, all of them. It doesn't matter where they belong. It's all the same, it's all about power and money. Has anything changed? I'm not sure. You can at least swear undisturbed.

Smoku: I cannot agree, as one man is to be sued for libel because he published some caricatures of the Kaczynski brothers on the net. Today I read in a newspaper that it was supposed to print an interview with the president, but when the interview was sent back after being authorized, it appeared that even the questions were changed. So the newspaper indignantly printed only a description of that situation.

Amoniak: OK, maybe it's not true. You won't get away with swearing.

MRR: Lots of lyrics concern living in a big city hell, an everyday chase, envy, plunging a knife into someone's back. Does the fact that you live in Warsaw influence your sense of the world?

Amoniak: Sure it does. Warsaw became an incredibly fucked up city. There is such a slaughter and chase that your head almost explodes. I can say something about it as I used to work for different companies and I could observe the rat race there. It stuck in my brain and I want to write about it to get rid of that ballast. As for writing about the city, I live in the city, so what can I do? I cannot handle trifles about love and trees; I can do it for myself at home and keep it in a drawer.

MRR: In your lyrics, you have to notice the anger about the pulp and lies that mass media are feeding us. At the same time, it seems that you are up-to-date with the current affairs. How do you reconcile those two?

Amoniak: My doctor told me to write about things that hurt me. And I do that.

Smoku: I think that my middle age crisis is just connected with that. I do not read newspapers because I don't buy them, but the news I read on the internet is enough for me. It's good that the comments below the articles are permitted and not punished.

Amoniak: We used recorded news not only between the songs but also as a background for the music. We used the gabbing of any cunts from TV, commentators, recordings from any demonstrations, slogans, discussions. Everything is there. We used it as a next medium, the carrier for that bunch of sounds we produced.

Smoku: I used to not care about politics, I wasn't interested in it, but I think the longer I live, the more it haunts me. I think about it more and talk about it.

MRR: Talking about those fragments mixed into the songs, there is one in "Body Bags," linked with our "friendship" with the USA and our troops taking part in the Iraqi war. What do you think about Polish society's reaction to those actions?

Amoniak: I think that most people accepted that intervention.

Smoku: I haven't ever felt like a patriot and that situation strengthened my conviction that I'm somewhere aside. Luckily, I have many friends and people who confirm I am not a complete nut. All those demonstrations, pickets, petitions—they haven't worked so far. I don't believe that anything is going to change. People at the helm do what they want to do and don't care about the opinions of others. When it doesn't work, they send police on their people. Do I like it? I am against wars and I think that the Americans shouldn't have entered Iraq and built "democracy" there. And if so, they should have done it in a peaceful way, shouldn't have sent troops there, but rather books or humanitarian aid. You are able to talk with a man who is reaching out his hand. A man who starts with hitting your face will never be your friend.

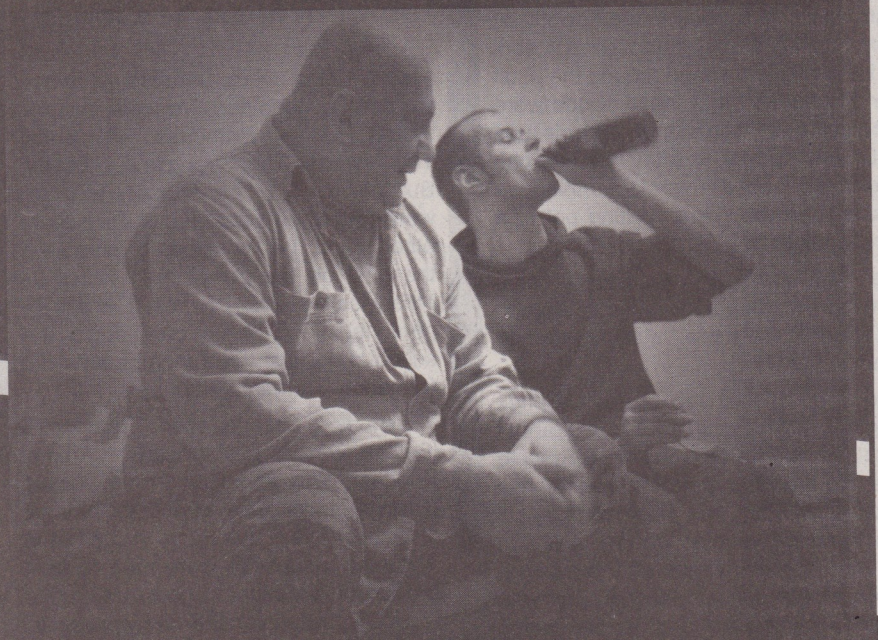
Amoniak: It was hard to deal with Iraq because it's hard to talk with stupid jerks. All that radical Islam, it's hard to deal with when it is all big politics. All radicalism is fucked up, whether Muslim or Christian. Poland is far from Iraq, I don't know anything about that country and it suddenly appears that I am in a state of war. It is out of my control.

Smoku: I respect all the nations and all the cultures and all the creatures living on this earth.

MRR: Why are we still here in this crap and not in England, as approximately half of the punks from this country are? What keeps you here, what do you occupy yourself with every day?

Amoniak: I don't know what keeps me here. Maybe it's only this band. Apart from that, I am completely bored. I am not going to piss off because I lived in the West several times. It's cool but I'm too old for that move. I'm trying to puke in those bastard's troughs to make them not that happy. I don't want to talk about my plans as nobody cares about them, but I am not that happy with all my actions.

Smoku: I have the impression that more and more people are leaving. The emigration wave is similar to that of the end of the '80s. I work as a sound engineer here and there and I try to work at home as well. And lately, my third job is building a recording studio with my friend. Everything aims at having one job only. I am going to open a studio with Aktywator Mario Dziurex and we are going to dedicate ourselves to it. I hope we will succeed and everything will calm down.



MRR: Say something about your "studio past," as you are responsible for the sound of many important records released here in the '90s.

Smoku: In the beginning of the '90s I was expelled from the university. At the same time Robert Brylewski brought the equipment from Stanclewo to Warsaw, and he had an opportunity to rent some rooms at Remont in return for recording some lady singing with piano accompaniment or something like that. There were times when it was possible to record bands for free. Brylu was looking for somebody to take care of it, and I was a musician and I had been in the studio and seen how it works before. I had an impression that people who were recording when I was playing in bands were never able to capture what I had in mind. I felt that if I had known how it worked, I could have done it my way. I had time, there was a place, I used to stay there days and nights and record bands. And that's how some years passed. When Zlota Skala declined, I wandered here and there. I had a longer affair with studio Manta. And now we are going to work for ourselves. The rooms we found are too small for the band to record together at once. But separately, drums and then guitars, it will be easy.

MRR: Amoniak, the visual setting is your work. Do you do it professionally? Do you have any other covers on your account?

Amoniak: In regards to covers, I've only done several projects. I am a professional but unemployed. I am a biologist-ecologist by profession, but it just happened that I started to deal with computer graphics and I started to work as a graphic artist for a big press concerns. I used to do layout for the tabloids. In time, I began to get tired with all that, started to work for myself, but it didn't go well. And now, I can at least make a cover for a record and no one can disturb me, I am able to do everything on my own.

MRR: Second LP?

Amoniak: As soon as the studio is ready, we'll start to work on new material. To play gigs, we have to prepare a gig set. It means to make new songs, as we don't want to play all the songs from Politkarepoisonekurvae at the gigs. I think we'll start to make a new record straight away. There are lyrics and ideas. There's nothing to wait for. It's going to be sharper. All the interested parties shouldn't be worried.

punk as fuck

THE STORY OF

Toxik ephex

BY LANCE HAHN

Aberdeen, in the far Northeast of Scotland, is the land of castles, gardens and the world's only malt whiskey trail. What's that? On what seems to be a beautiful and scenic hiking trail, you can hit up eight or so distilleries along the way, including the Glenfiddich and Glenlivet distilleries with free samples abound. That's a hike even I could enjoy.

Such is the wellspring from which the lyrics and humorous group Toxik Ephex sprung. Still active today, the group has captured a kind of humor and joyful vision of utopianism not often shared by their urban counterparts.

Fred, AKA Inspector Blake, guitarist: "There was a wonderful community center called the 62 Club, which was the hub of the Aberdeen punk scene. Being too young to get into pubs, most of the local punk bands played their first gigs there, often organizing and running the events themselves. It was a good experience for everyone involved, giving a chance for independence and ownership of our musical endeavors. Probably the same as everywhere else, there were social groups within social groups, and when they came together it was superb. At other times they would fight between themselves for reasons I fail to understand these days. Anarchy, I suppose, was a word on a Pistols track until Crass came along. Previously, our understanding and use of the term was limited to describing mayhem and disorder (of which there was plenty!), and the gratuitous circling of the capital 'A'."

Even up in the Highlands, punk was making its presence felt with some thanks to media exploitation.

Fred: "I first heard of punk rock via sensationalized stories in the mainstream media. It grabbed my attention even before I'd heard any of the music. As for the music, I didn't get it at first, but then, in a strange time politically and socially, at a time when I was about to leave school and had to get my head around the adult world, I realized that these bands were expressing, in words and spirit, issues that I was struggling with. The anarcho side of punk politics was something we absorbed in the social melting pot of a living punk scene."

The initial idea of Toxik Ephex came from the first generation of punk. Starting off, they were a more traditional garage band.

Fred: "The first lineup of Toxik Ephex (originally The Abductors) came about when we were at school. I knew Steppie was into the Stranglers and had a bass guitar, and Eck was deemed a good candidate for vocalist when I saw him covered in custard slice and throwing it about on the school stairwell. Eck was game for a cackle and a real havoc merchant, a big guy with no concept of his own strength, an attribute that often provided a rich mixture of embarrassment and hilarity. Our drummer, Sweat, was brought onboard cause he liked punk and he was a drummer. We arranged our first rehearsal in the school music department for Saturday, the 3rd of February 1979. When we made that arrangement, little did we expect we would spend our first 20 minutes as a band reading newspaper reports of the death of Sid Vicious, which had occurred the previous day."

Their influences read like a John Peel playlist.

Fred: "Crass were unheard of when we first got together. We were into the Pistols, Clash, Ramones, UK Subs, The Adverts, The Stranglers, Ultravox, Buzzcocks, SLF, Art Attacks, etc. We were crap when we started, but like every other band we considered ourselves the best on the planet, and to tell us otherwise was likely to result in severe personal injury! We got our first gig at a school disco just three months after our formation. I remember our set.

"'Susie is a Headbanger' (Ramones), 'Belsen was a gas' (Pistols), 'Animal Bondage' (Art Attacks), 'Pretty Vacant' (Pistols), and my very own first offerings, 'I Hate Work,' 'Abortion Victim,' and 'Fatal Accident.' We were mad fuckers preoccupied with death, gore, and a need to shock, whatever the consequences. Our sound was more by accident than design, dictated by the array of shit

equipment we could drag together to compliment our shit musical skills!"

The quintessentially punk name was both that and something in the nature of lifestyle.

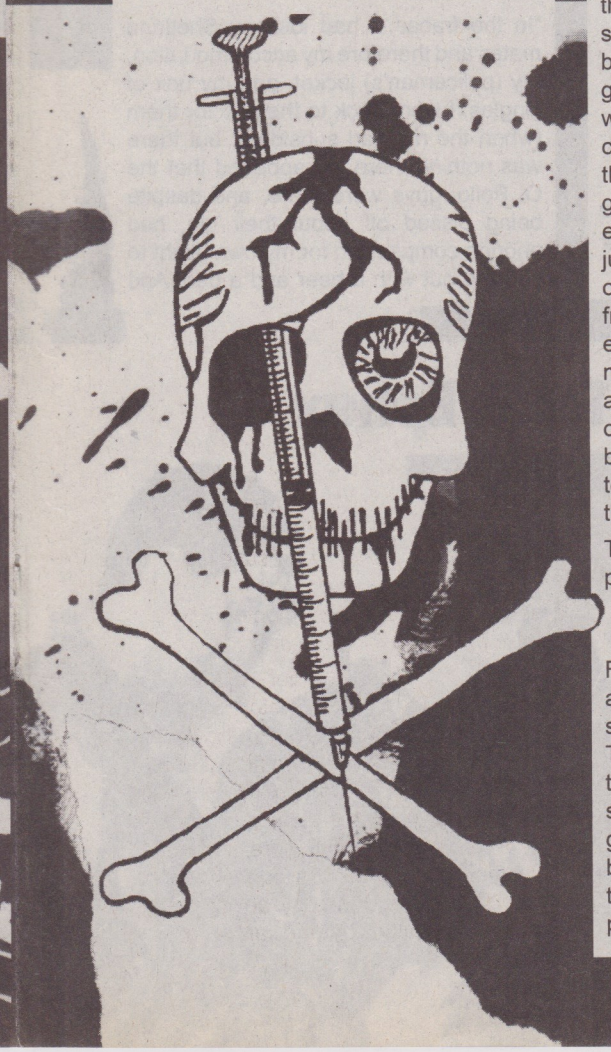
Fred: "My first job on leaving school was as a trainee pharmacy technician, but the band's collective expertise in the realm of pharmaceutical products was of a self-taught nature. Need I say more?"

Despite what you might think of a town so far north, there were a number of local likeminded bands to play with, as well as the occasional touring group needing support.

Fred: "Oh, now let me think. Bondage, The Critics, The Numatics, Skurge, The Condemned, Legal Crime, Carnage, lots of other local punk bands. Then there were support gigs to Zounds, Upstarts, Varukers, Intensive Care. I'll maybe come back to this one."

But their gigs were still limited to the area.

Fred: "Err…no! Not really, other than an open air 'Anti Royal Wedding' gig in Dundee, headlined by The Alternative, we played a community center in Forres, and an open-air rock fest gig in Nairn. We didn't really get our act together until around 1985. That's when the lineup familiar to most (Mikey, Dod, Chiz, Dave/Frank and myself) got settled in and began to believe in ourselves as a band."



With much of the music scene in Scotland often overshadowed by Glasgow and Edinburgh, up in Aberdeen the groups were developing under the radar.

Fred: "Don't know really, there are rivalries big and small, old and new: Scotland/England, Aberdeen/Dundee, men/women. Whether it's healthy or not is a matter of where we want to take it. Rivalry between Edinburgh and Glasgow is many faceted and very old and very established. I would be extremely surprised if it did not exist 'even in the anarcho scene.'"

While they didn't feel in competition with English bands, there was still the understanding that geography put them at something of a disadvantage.

Fred: "Geography mainly, and population density. When you're a new band, skint, naive, and rough round the edges, it helps to have the maximum number of people and venues within the minimum distance/area. For a London band, traveling to Aberdeen was often cost prohibitive, despite the opportunities they would have to make it possible, so we lost out on seeing many of the best! For an Aberdeen band with limited gig opportunities, London was where we wanted to be playing, but with the capital of Punkland already bursting at the seams with bands, the chances of a gig, even if we did it for free and walked every mile with our gear on our backs, just wasn't going to happen. So we lost out again! With so much on offer, bands from London, Birmingham, Manchester, etc., don't need to play in Aberdeen, and many limit Scottish dates to Edinburgh and Glasgow. Scottish bands, on the other hand, really need to cross the border to get heard. There are, after all, ten times as many people in England than in Scotland."

The only documentation of that early period is a few practice tapes not necessarily meant for release as demos.

Fred: "The only recordings we had done at that time were shitty tapes done on a shitty mono tape recorder at rehearsals. They were absolutely dire, but I kept them for many years as a memento, a snapshot of the time. Eventually they gave way to age and poor storage and became virtually inaudible, particularly the one that someone (probably Eck!) playfully tossed into a fish tank!"

But it was one of those practice room recordings that made it to Crass. Eventually one of the tracks popped up on the second *Bullshit Detector* compilation.

Fred: "I can't remember really, I had become cynical and disillusioned with Crass around that time, and was nauseated by the fact that everyone around seemed to be spouting Crass quotes rather than thinking for themselves and responding in their own heartfelt words. Basically, I heard there was an opportunity (at a time when none seemed to exist), I got the address and sent the demo. The rest is history. (To blindly quote someone or other!)"

Despite the growing cynicism in Crass fans, the group was still politically active and influenced by the ideas of the anarcho scene.

Fred: "Possibly too many to mention: animal rights, special baby unit, unemployed groups, left wing groups, homelessness groups, support for the elderly, among others, were supported by Toxik Ephex in one way or another."

Between the release of their track on the *Bullshit Detector* compilation in 1982 and 1985, the group's sound had grown in both melody and precision.

Fred: "Our musical style owes more to the influence of the early punk bands in general. There's a world of anthemic melody in the music of the UK Subs, Clash, Pistols, Adverts, Cockney Rejects, Angelic Upstarts, etc. Our mold was well made. To state whether I related to the anarcho bands' music would involve too tight a definition of what their music was about. I considered anarcho bands as a breath of fresh air in that their music expressed individuality. Zounds' music was melodic and anthemic in a big way, actually challenging to the punk ear, which had become tuned to Crass' stripped down thrash poetry, which too was an incredible breath of fresh air when it arrived on our decks. Then we heard bands, which to this day are absolutely unique, such as the Poison Girls, Flux of Pink Indians, etc. No problem relating to it at all. It was all punk, and if it stood out it would be listened to, and as with anything that offers new perspective, understanding or outlook, it stayed on the agenda, and seeped into our language, our being, and our music."

Without the benefit of an outside label, the group decided it was time to release some of their own music. Fred formed Green Vomit Records with the intention of releasing the first Toxik Ephex EP.

Fred: "It was a fantastic experience,

which pushed the band's development and credibility. We had never used a professional recording studio before, so it was a bit mind-blowing, even for a band of six years standing. We learned a lot from that recording and witnessed some amazing techniques by the engineer to drag the best sound out of our ailing, battle-scarred equipment. Our drummer, Chiz, must have spent the best part of two hours strategically sticking tape and toilet tissue on his kit to defeat the rattling, groaning byproduct of playing that poor contraption. My guitar sound was created by playing into an ancient puke-encrusted valve reel-to-reel recorder, then feeding out to a Selmer 50watt valve amp. Great racket when played, but when guitar was not being played, it would spontaneously and randomly produce a cacophony of hisses, buzzes, crackles and howls! In order for the bass to do the 'Fallout Shelter' intro uninterrupted by the racket, he asked Mikey to play the intro with all other equipment switched off. He then gob-smacked us by taking a razor blade to the tape, throwing away a ten-foot section, and sellotaping it back together. The result was incredible, not even the slightest click or sigh before the drums and guitar come crashing in!

"The recording and mixing were done on the same day: generally not a good idea, and if I could do it again, I would cut back on the reverb/effects. Still though, I love that EP."

Their debut *Punk As Fuck* EP was released in 1986 to great response, largely due to the eternally catchy A-side, "Fallout Shelter." Reminiscent of Crisis with its melodic guitar parts, the song is classic nuclear paranoia with loads of reverb.

Everywhere you go
There's a black cloud hanging low
It's mushroom shaped
It's all in your mind
What are you gonna do
When your nightmares come true
And you've got no place left to hide

Backed with "Always Skint" and "Nothing's Permissive," it's a classic DIY punk single with handwritten labels, xeroxed insert and glued-on cover art (subsequent represses have had printed covers). Despite the serious subject matter, the record name, cover art, and overall spirit was one of fun. It didn't hurt that the band could play with Inspector Blake taking great pride in his playing.

Fred: "The guitar solo of course! But then there's that intro on bass, the promise of those slashing drumsticks during the drum buildup, those vacuous cutting vocals (delivering lyrics that were written whilst I was confined to a toilet seat due to having taken a preparation to purge threadworms! Fallout shelter indeed! How very Freudian!), and those raucous choruses. Hmm, have I missed anything?"

The time was not especially ripe for punk in the UK. As a result, touring wasn't an immediate concern. Instead, the group used the record as a way of reaching out to the international underground community.

Fred: "It opened a few doors for us, and got us better known. It was reviewed in *Sounds*, *NME*, and *Maximum Rocknroll*, as well as local press, student mags, and punk zines. It brought us in touch with people from all over Europe and America."

One friendship struck up at that time was with anarcho-skins, Oi Polloi.

Fred: "Now, this is a great story! A matter of weeks after the release of the *Punk As Fuck* EP, I decided I should go to the Edinburgh Punk Picnic to meet up with folk and pass some singles around, and hopefully sell a few as well. Had a great time, hundreds of punks there, made lots of friends and caught up with many an old one. Had a memorable game of football in Princes' Street Gardens on a lovely day, so sunny it made the cheap beer taste good! Sold a good number of singles and collected lots of contacts.

"But then it was time to call it a day and move on. I heard that Oi Polloi was playing in a pub called Clowns. Having heard of Oi Polloi, but not having heard their music, I had to go check them out, and I was chuffed that a couple of Shetland chums, who I would be staying with that night, were also heading along.

"So we got there just in time to catch the band kicking off. Wow! The impact of Deek's voice was immediate! What a sound for such a small venue—chainsaw guitar, thundering bass and smacking drum sound. But alas!

"It was discovered that there was a meeting of fascist skinhead bastards upstairs from the venue. What a strange arrangement! And it was only a matter of time before a little (shall we say?) unrest occurred. I don't quite know what happened next, but I turned round at one point to see police wading into the pub with truncheons drawn, ordering everyone to get out. Well fuck it, I ran out, and wished I hadn't! There was a riot in full pelt outside, the sound of shouting, swearing and screaming punctuated by the sickening thud of truncheon on skull—fucking terrifying. I was told by a fast-approaching truncheon-wielding cop to 'Clear the area!' I did not have a clue where I was nor which direction to go, so I just chose the one that was going to take me as far away from this dude as possible.

"In the fracas, I had lost my Shetland mates and therefore my accommodation, my (policeman's) jacket, and my box of singles. I went back to the pub for them (when the riot had subsided), but there was nothing there. It happened that the Oi Polloi guys were there, and despite being pissed off about their gig, had enough compassion for my own plight to sort me out with a beer and a bed. And

Toxik Ephex

that was the start of a great relationship. I got a couple of their singles, I gave/sent them some of ours, we set up gigs for each other, and went on to do a great split album and a tour together. I developed a huge respect for Deek Allan and kept in regular touch until my decision to leave Toxik Ephex in 1991."

With both Toxik Ephex and Oi Polloi having some available material, it was decided to do a split LP.

Fred: "It just made so much sense. Toxik Ephex had sold enough singles to finance another recording, and Oi Polloi was in a similar position. We had already discussed doing a tour together and it seemed natural to have a split LP ready to sell on the tour. So we went for it."

They decided to release the LP on Green Vomit.

Fred: "Other than the Crass compo, we were never given an offer from anyone. It all comes down to cash in the end, and if you have the cash, the confidence, the time and energy, there's not really much a label can do for you that you can't do for yourself. It also means you have control of your music, artwork, etc., and control over the price. By releasing on Green Vomit we had the best of both worlds in that we could sell at a modest price, but still earn enough for our efforts. We were often criticized by anarcho-punks for ensuring we got decent cash for our gigs, and yet our tendency to do gigs for nothing/good causes/charities over the first six years was the very reason we had nothing to show for our efforts and had little control over where we were going as a band. We developed the view that if we didn't get paid for gigs, it made no difference to the charge at the door, and more of the money spent by punters at our gigs would end up in the pockets of promoters, venue owners, van hire companies, etc. Without some income, the band would remain at the mercy of promoters and be grateful for support gigs where they could use other bands' equipment. We never had a problem with support bands sharing our equipment, but were miffed when some of these same bands attacked our stance on gig fees when they didn't have the responsibility to pay for maintenance of the equipment, the deterioration of which they were contributing to. Even the price of stamps and envelopes becomes a burden if dole money is the only income, but would we dare not respond to mail? The bottom line is that it was only when we took a more self-valuing attitude that it became possible to make records and to do gigs farther a field."

The result was 1987's classic *Mad As Fuck* split LP.

Fred: "It was a follow on from *Punk As Fuck*. The idea for the sleeve picture was already being developed, and had T.E. produced an album on our own to follow up the EP, it would almost certainly have been called *Mad As Fuck*. Anyway, we met with Oi Polloi to discuss the ins and outs of the split album, and I was extremely overjoyed when the sleeve idea and title were deemed acceptable by both bands, and reflected our shared concern for the environment and the future of our planet under threat from greed and corporate madness."

Using the record as a way of introducing their more melodic and sing-a-long type anthems, the Toxik recording was also a big step forward in sound quality.

Fred: "Well, we didn't record and mix on the same day! I think in general it is a better quality recording. We felt it was a great opportunity to introduce the uninitiated to the diversity of T.E. Also, there didn't seem to be much point in putting any of our thrashier songs on, as there was a danger of coming across as a second rate Oi Polloi. So it was a case of both bands doing what they do best, and the punters getting a quality product whatever their musical leanings."

This friendship and "work" relationship with Oi Polloi led to Toxik Ephex's first official tour.

Fred: "Our first tour was with Oi Polloi. It was an eventful couple of weeks. The writing was on the wall when the albums eventually arrived on the morning we were due to head out on the tour. Now all we had to do was cross our fingers and hope our "punk as fuck minibus" would scrape through its M.O.T. (also on the morning we were due to head out!) Thankfully, it did. But perhaps it would have been better if it hadn't! If you want me to tell you more about the tour, then ask. There's a lot to tell. It was quite an adventure!"

With their name becoming more known and the success of the split LP, Toxik Ephex was making friends with other bands, including Shrapnel, with whom they would do a split EP the following year.

Fred: "Shrapnel was a Welsh band who played with us once. They were impressive, so when Karl (Words Of Warning) approached us to do the single with Shrapnel, we had no hesitation."

Recorded for Words Of Warning Records, it would be the first non-Green Vomit release by the band.

Fred: "As I said, Karl made us a good offer. We already had enough albums and singles to punt ourselves, so the idea of doing the recording and leaving the production and distribution to someone else, at a busy period for us, was perfect."

Titled *Acts Of Desperation*, the split EP again showcased the band's melodic energy.

Fred: "The guitar! Only joking, the choruses are nice and big, the whole positivity aspect is important. Most

punk songs are a tirade of anger and frustration, so it was good to record "Life's for Living" and offer something positive to the punk scene. I certainly have a positive view of my involvement with punk, some of the best times of my life, so at least one positive song had to come out of it. As for the EP title, I don't know. I don't even know who came up with it. Seemed appropriate in connection with our anti-heroin song."

The "anti-heroin song" would refer to "Does Someone Have To Die."

Fred: "It was our response to an element of our scene who were attempting to put a positive spin on heroin use. I personally have no problem with people taking drugs or taking risks with their health/lives, provided they face up to the nature and severity of those risks and weigh up the possible consequences of their actions. Therefore when young friends of mine seriously consider trying out heroin because "so and so has been taking it for years, and he's OK and tells me it's brilliant." (By the way, "so and so" died of a heroin overdose five years ago, and I cried my eyes sore for him—he was actually a really nice guy despite misleading vulnerable people via his own denial of the risks he took with his life). So it was a method of presenting the other side of the story, the evidence of which was all around for those who chose to look for it. It quickly became one of our most frequently requested songs at gigs."

With more touring of England and the continent under their belt, the group felt ready to record a full-length LP. By 1990, the band had the songs but not the cash. Resourceful as ever, they began work on *The Adventures of Nobby Porthole, the Cock of the North*.

Fred: "'Nobby Porthole' is a name appropriated to me in connection with scurrilous, elaborately exaggerated/ fabricated stories regarding my womanizing! We were forever ripping the piss out of each other, so I took it all in the spirit it was dished out and the name stuck. The deal was if you enjoyed the slapstick and mayhem, you don't put the sour face on when it's coming your way, so I laughed with the rest when *Nobby Porthole, the Cock of the North* was suggested as the album title. There were no big and beautiful ideas really, we wanted to do an album and felt we had plenty of good material, but following financially costly tours of Germany and England, it seemed beyond our means. But when you have a guy like Dod on your side, there's always a way. Dod approached a local record shop, One Up Records, regarding the finance, and we took it from there. One Up financed all the recording and manufacturing but gave us total control over the musical and artistic content. The latter was discussed and decided on via democratic means. I had a lot of say regarding previous releases, and therefore took a huge amount of the work upon myself. On the *Nobby* album we shared the input more evenly, and even asked friends of the band to contribute some of the artwork."

Starting off with the brilliant, imaginative, and catchy "The Other Half Lives," the record is one of the most catchy, fun and imaginative albums of the genre.

Fred: "Very happy with it. The recording was an absolute emotional roller coaster. It took us three hours to play one of our songs from start to finish without fucking up—songs we'd played hundreds of times without a hitch!

"Very tense and frustrating, but as soon as we knocked one down, the rest came rolling along. The mixing was a great experience. When I listen to it now I still see guys laughing at "Bonny Wee Jeanie McColl," tears as we listened to Dod singing so passionately on "Do You Care," the frustration of attempting to get the sax in tune, hilarious scenes of engineer Pete Haigh having a fit every time Dod shook a tambourine into the mic, the jokes to break up the boredom. It's difficult to listen to any of our recordings without these scenes springing to mind."

With the funny title, cartoon artwork and general loutish attitude, the record does also have a serious tone with smart lyrics.

The ship of state is so full of hate
So don't be brave
Don't rock the boat just try to stay afloat
And ride the wave
Try and keep your head above the water
Tolerate the mental torture
Don't you know they've got you where they want you?

But within a few months of the record's release, Fred split the group and the band essentially split for the first time.

Fred: "We've all just moved on in life and have other commitments, which prevent us from committing the time and energy required to progress with Toxik Ephex. One of the factors, which led to my decision to leave, was the fact that we had to move from our St Katherine's base, where we had rehearsal, storage and office facilities, which made all the functions of the band possible. Also, our financial position at the time seemed hopeless. The prospect of touring again seemed remote and this made all the running around, correspondence, and the pressure to write more songs quite pointless. There was also huge pressure to sell *Nobby* in order to repay the investment provided by One Up—all work and no play! However, at the present level of involvement, I am enjoying the gigs more than I have for many years, minus the pressure to operate as a business, and now that I am involved with about six or seven very different bands, I no longer feel concerned when Toxik have no scheduled gigs."

Since then, the band has managed to make most of their music still available.

Fred: "We recorded a track called "Land of No Opportunity," which we planned to

release as a single, but never did. I think Dod has the only copy on tape, other than the copy that was sent for inclusion on a punk compilation tape released in Germany. I haven't heard anything further since sending the tape. We have a cut price CD compiled for our 25th anniversary, cheekily titled *Toxik Ephex Silver Wedding*. It's a cheap repackaging of the *Punk As Fuck* EP, the Toxik tracks from *Mad As Fuck*, and all the tracks from *Nobby*. There are also three or four videos of live gigs somewhere, I think Dod has two of them."

They've also released a 7" of "Land Of No Opportunity," with a brand new song called "Civilized." A CDEP has also been released with their songs from the Shrapnel split, along with some bonus material. It's clear the band still feel the relevance of what they do.

Fred: "People still come up to me to this day and tell me how Toxik changed their lives, inspired them to form a band, gave them a feeling of belonging, etc., and it's always great to hear. We had a great relationship with our crowd, we hung out with them, and very often our songs were borne out of discussions with them. Many appreciated the fact that our words were their words, and they were part of the band, and conversely, we were a part of them. I have already mentioned the "family feeling," but every lineup had some element of brotherhood, loyalty, and appreciation of each other as people. We always looked out for each other and spent a lot of time together. This aspect was sorely missed when I left the band, much more than I missed the gigs. It's also immensely satisfying that our songs have stood the test of time, and our gigs are being attended by a whole new generation. Some of our old buddies drag their teenage kids along and often they end up joining in the choruses like they've known them all their lives, and are committed to every word—very powerful. Last year in Shetland, my own kids saw Toxik live for the first time and were thoroughly besotted! My eleven-year-old daughter was up on stage with a microphone singing "I Don't Want No Nuclear Waste In My Garden," along with other young kids, ex-Toxik members, the promoter, his brother, Mark Burgess of The Chameleons, various members of other bands at the festival, and assorted punters. We always tried to make our gigs an occasion/party and to include as many people as possible, so it was wonderful that we could still make it happen all these years on. But then, Shetland gigs were always very special."

So Toxik Ephex are still an essentially functional band, playing gigs and releasing records. Over 25 years still gives them a lot of perspective.

Fred: "Oh, that's a huge subject! Where do I start? I was always disappointed when an ideal or philosophy became a badge/club/clique. One of the questions I don't see in this interview but which always used to appear in zines was, "Are you vegetarians?" And although most of us were, I found it such a loaded question, and was always tempted to respond with, 'Who the fuck wants to know? What if we're not?' Or 'Not if it's considered normal.' Anarchy was similar. Either you were or you weren't, but in certain circles it was not cool to say you were not! All the more reason, I often thought, not to be! We would resist all mechanisms that sought to categorize and pigeonhole us as individuals, yet we would bring pressure on one another to conform to still tighter criteria. I don't think the anarcho scene was at all naive, quite the opposite in many cases. But in the end it was a framework for a way of thinking about ourselves and our place in relation to the world in which we were living. I always felt more at ease within the frames of reference associated with early socialism circa the 1900s, but never found a lot of conflict with anarcho thinking, just the pressure to conform, and the preponderance of sloganeers and badge wearers. I believe it'd be dangerous to wholeheartedly accept any single doctrine without considering the merits of others, whether that doctrine is Christianity, Anarchy, Socialism, Buddhism, Libertarianism or whatever. However, we were young guys living in a pseudo-dictatorship, with no faith in mainstream politics, so it was important to have access to a shared philosophy, which gave our social interactions some structure and meaning. Did Crass, when they wrote that line "tired of staring up a superstar's arse," realize that they were embarking on a journey that would lead to them being similarly idolized? And if not, why did we discover Crass paraphernalia (patches, etc.) hanging up in our record shops at over-inflated prices? Today in Asda stores, there are kids clothes with the word "Punk" and anarchy signs emblazoned on them. Whilst I don't regard that as the legacy I would have wished for, it is at least a legacy—evidence that we all did something that remains a concept, however misunderstood. I also regard the concept of anarchy as a significant building block of my persona, albeit alongside many other building blocks, and has an effect on the influence I bring to bear as a parent in educating and equipping my children for life. But I'm not the only one, and I am certain that evidence of our socio-anarcho leanings having been absorbed by our kids, friends, colleagues, etc., is not too far from the surface."

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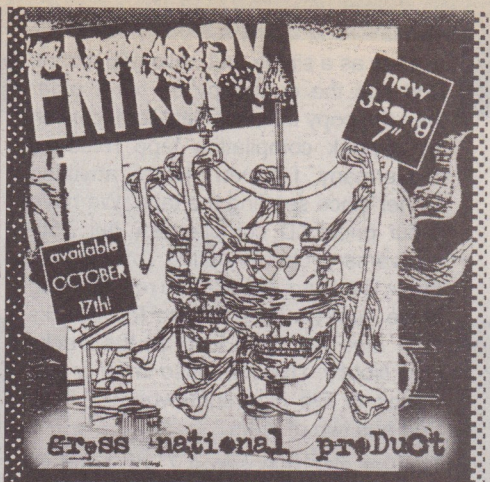

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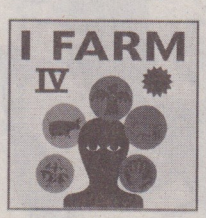

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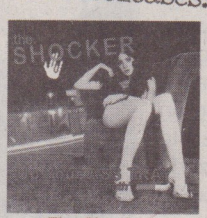

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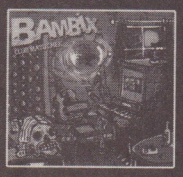

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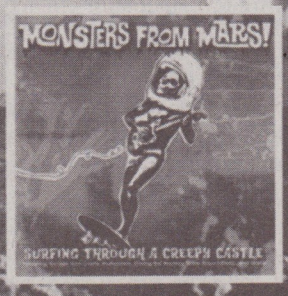

AUKTION

EVERY NOW AND THEN, A NEW SUB-GENRE POPS UP IN THE PUNK SCENE TO CONFUSE OUR LIVES EVEN MORE. IT'S STARTING TO BE QUITE HARD TO ALWAYS UNDERSTAND NEW HYPE AND NEW SUB-GENRES. ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO, AUKTION, A YOUNG HARDCORE PUNK/D-BEAT BAND FROM THE FAR NORTH OF SWEDEN, WAS ONE OF THE BANDS TO CONFUSE US WITH A NEW MUTATION OF THE OLD FORMULA. D-BEAT ROCK 'N ROLL? WHAT THE HELL? SINCE THEN, THE EXPRESSION HAS BEEN USED BOTH HERE AND ABROAD, AND A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO I SAW IT ON A FLYER FOR A GIG IN BARCELONA. ANYWAY, FOR YOU WHO DON'T KNOW ABOUT AUKTION, HERE THEY ARE. INTERVIEW WITH POTIN (VOCALS).

MRR: Hey guys, so what's up with this D-Beat R 'n R thing?
I think it's simply a thing going on a lot now in the punk scene worldwide actually, or I have started to notice it at least. I think we have had the interest of doing something like this since the start in 2003. All of us in the band are really into both '70s rock as well as garage rock and the '80s arena rock thing, more or less. I've been a big Guns 'n' Roses since I was young, and I think it was a pretty obvious thing for us to mix the styles we like most when we make music. Bands like Skitkids and Inepsy had just released their first stuff, which really amazed me, and we thought, "Hell! Let's do this thing." Now, it's about two years after a lot of bands started calling themselves "D-Beat R 'n' R" and bands playing music in that direction starting to be heard everywhere—I think a lot of them are fucking amazing! It's a good mix, what more can I say?

MRR: OK, so then you released the *D-Beat Rock N Roll Mayhem* album. How was the response on that, and what would you say were the main influences for you doing it?
We recorded *D-Beat RnR Mayhem* in February of 2005. The inspiration was probably a lot from bands like Zeke, Totalitär, Skitkids, Inepsy, etc. Bands I listened to a lot at the time, but making the songs, we did a lot of rip-offs from AC/DC, Skid Row, Guns N Roses, Motörhead and such. The CD was released by Wasted Sounds for a European tour in the summer of 2005 that we later had to cancel, and is at the moment sold out, and the LP was released by Assel Records later that fall for a tour of Scandinavia. The response was mostly good, though I think some people that are really precise with their definition of d-beat/raw punk were mad with us for using the expression for something it wasn't, blah blah blah. You know the deal, people like to complain when you do something new and then it gets hyped and these people take back everything they said. But as I said, overall the response on the record was great, and it still is, which is really nice of course.

MRR: So, you cancelled the European tour of 2005, why was that?
Oh, it was maybe two weeks before the tour was supposed to start; we were doing a show in Stockholm, and I had been up all night playing video games, watching *Married With Children*, drinking shitloads of coffee. We left Umeå at about 5 AM because it's a bit of a drive down there, and when we came to my grandparents' place, I got some fucked up psychosis or something like that, and I actually don't remember a thing of what happened, but I was really fucked up for about ten minutes. After I had laid down for a while and eaten some food we left for the show and I didn't really realize why everybody was so upset. Maybe I was just being plain stupid or maybe it was some kind of shock. Anyway, we did the show which was really good and left for the sleeping place before I started to realize that something kinda strange maybe happened earlier that day. So, I asked our roadie Simon about it and he told me the whole thing which freaked me out a lot. Back in Umeå I went to the emergency room and they did this EKG and EEG and told me it might have been an epileptic attack. About one week later (five days before the tour was to start), I went to do get an X-ray of my brain to check for brain tumors and shit. Luckily I didn't have one, but I got the diagnosis of epilepsy, so I thought that it maybe wasn't that good of an idea to leave for tour a couple of days later. We were supposed to play on Trashfest 9 in Hoogeven, Holland that week with Lärm, Martyrdöd, No Hope For The Kids, Betercore, Oi Polloi and shitloads of other great bands, so I wasn't really happy with this, that's one thing I'm sure of.

THE INSPIRATION WAS PROBABLY A LOT FROM BANDS LIKE ZEKE, TOTALITÄR, SKITKIDS, INEPSY, ETC...BUT MAKING THE SONGS, WE DID A LOT OF RIP-OFFS FROM AC/DC, SKID ROW, GUNS N ROSES, MOTÖRHEAD AND SUCH.

MRR: And the situation now?
No problem, actually. I've had some more attacks, but after I got used to the pills they gave me, I stopped having them. I have been traveling both in Europe and Scandinavia for a couple of months and been on a couple of tours with no problems, which is awesome of course!

MRR: So tell me little about you guys, then. Maybe someone wants to know.
Auktion started in 2003 as a small project,

mostly for fun when my old band broke up and three friends of mine were all in the same situation. I guess all of us were quite interested in doing some D-beat after playing punk rock for a couple of years and it went from there. A lot of people react to our age, which probably is understandable. Kajsa, the bass player, is the youngest and she's seventeen now. Therefore she was around fourteen when we started the band. Emanijel is the oldest one and he's only 22, but all of us have been around the punk scene since a really young age: playing music, touring, setting up shows and so on. I guess it's kind of a Swedish thing. Most girls and guys starts to get into the punk scene when they are around thirteen to sixteen, and some of us were even younger, so I guess we had the time to take up influences etc. The line-up at the moment is: Kajsa – Bass / Sara – Growls / Potin - High-pitched Screams / Emanijel – Guitar / Sofia – Guitar and Björn on Drums. 3 Guys, 3 Grrrls.

MRR: Do any of you play in any other bands or have any projects on the side?
I am at the moment playing bass with a neo-crust/black metal-influenced band from Stockholm called Arcatera. In September and October we are doing a European tour, playing around fifteen countries, traveling through almost twenty. I'm really looking forward to that.
Emanijel plays in The Rats (ex-Rabid Grannies) and they are in Central Europe touring at the moment I'm writing this. They play a mix of '80s USHC and thrash. They are probably the best live act around in the Swedish punk scene at the moment. He also plays in Kommunen, a KSMB/Ebba Grön-sounding Sweden '78-'82 punk band that also has members from Disconvenience. Really good! Björn has always some small projects on the side, he is just a musician and likes to play music a lot overall. I think the most serious one of his projects is called Bobbies Bitz and plays Surf/Punk or something like that.

MRR: OK, but Kajsa played in another band before Auktion? How old was she then?
Yeah, Sara and Kajsa (who are sisters) used to play in a band called Ungjävlar. Snotty Swedish '80s punk, fucking amazing actually! They did only one demo-tape around 2002 which is awesome as well, and I am trying to push them at the moment to release it as a 7" so some more people get to hear it. Maybe if I nag some more on them they will let me do it. Ungjävlar was by the way the band that inspired a lot of the Ny Våg-bands to start in Umeå like Knugen Faller and Tristess, which is kinda cool. I think Kajsa was around eleven when they started the band in 2000 if I remember everything right. When I met them and saw them live for the first time at Punkfest 5 she was twelve, doing a gig at a punk rock festival. I can't even describe how amazing it was to see them.

MRR: Oh shit, sounds really cool.. So when is this going to be released?
Haha, maybe when hell freezes over or something like that. I think they like it to be a thing in the past or they are afraid that a 7"release would make them remember it in another way, I don't really know. I just want more people to get to hear an incredible band!

MRR: All right, back to Auktion then. You did a European tour in May and June this year. How was that? Any crazy tour stories or something like that?
If you want crazy tour stories you have to ask about the December tour we did last year, that was a fucking nightmare, but this tour was really good overall. We lost about 1200 Euros that I haven't got back, so I'm still kinda poor from this tour. But who cares, that's punk rock for you. The gigs were really nice, we did probably one of our best shows ever on this tour and there were a lot of people showing up everywhere, a lot of nice people we drank with, and we just had an awesome time. I think this is as good a tour as could be for me except maybe that it cost me a little to much. The food in Germany is fucking incredible and that's a really important part for me in life and then of course also on tour. I love to cook and I love to eat good vegan food. We ended the tour at a festival in Stuttgart, Germany where I got to eat seven different flavors of vegan ham, which was probably one of the best moments of my life and I even bought eleven packages (they were fucking cheap) to take home with me. Then, I forgot them at the festival but after some months I seem to have located the guy that sells the vegan ham and hopefully he can send them to me or I can pick them up on the tour I'm doing with Arcatera from Stockholm this fall. Ok, as you see.. I like to eat! Oh, we got to play with some really good bands also like Dean Dirg, Burial, Never Built Ruins, Cave Canem, Bones Brigade, Leadershit, etc., which is always a plus for a great tour.

WE ENDED THE TOUR AT A FESTIVAL IN STUTTGART, GERMANY WHERE I GOT TO EAT SEVEN DIFFERENT FLAVORS OF VEGAN HAM, WHICH WAS PROBABLY ONE OF THE BEST MOMENTS OF MY LIFE.

MRR: So nothing bad? What about your tour driver then?
Oops, I totally forgot about that. Haha, I don't know if he will kick my ass for telling this in *Maximum Rocknroll*, but I can keep his name out of it and I won't tell you what bands he's in either. But maybe you can figure it out if you try, he is from Umeå, Sweden. Anyway, we played a small village in the German countryside called Hillentrup. Amazing place with a big house with shitloads of punx living and a gig-room and a bar. I think it was just like 2000 people living in this village and it was far located from any big cities in the middle of nowhere. The day after the gig in Hillentrup we were supposed to play at the Archiv in Potsdam (outside Berlin) but didn't get any confirmation from the organizers so we decided to take the day off in Hillentrup to rest. The night before when we went to sleep our tour driver told me and our roadie Kaj that he had some problems with his testicles and that they really had hurt a lot for the last couple of days. I didn't think much more that moment and fell asleep a little drunk and fucked up. The day after, all of us in the band went for a walk around the village, the forests, the lakes and just had a beautiful day in Germany. When we got back to the house our driver and Kaj were gone. We asked Philly, who was living there, where they were and he told us they had left for the hospital because our driver didn't feel alright. Of course, I was the only one of us left there who knew about his problems from the day before, so I started to get shit worried. At dinner time eating soy meat and pasta, Kaj walks in through the door and looks really upset and said: "Our driver has left us." Like

he was dead, fucking hell! Of course this was only Kaj's way to make a prank on us all. Asshole. Apparently Kaj and one of the Hillentroopers drove our driver to the closest hospital because his pain had gotten worse. The doctors were really concerned and told him in bad English mixed with German that he might have twisted his testicles and they have to cut him up to have a look immediately. If the balls were black, they had to cut them off. So 12 AM that night, they opened up his scrotum to have a look. Luckily it was just an infection in the by-testicles and they gave him medicine and a cab to the airport and a arranged for him to get by airplane back to Sweden and Umeå. We got to visit him in the hospital on our way to Oldenburg from Hillentrup the day after the surgery and he looked quite alright though maybe it was the morphine talking, who knows? I met him about a week ago at a gig with one of his bands in Uppsala and he was doing great. Good enough of a tour story for you? Haha.

MRR: Haha, yeah yeah. That will do, so tell me what was so bad with the December tour?

Potin: It was just everything actually; Sara and I used to be a couple for about three and a half years and in November last year we broke up and that was about one month before the beginning of this two-week Scandinavian tour, so the atmosphere in the van wasn't the best, with us all the time fighting and not agreeing on anything. As I was the one who planned the tour, this was disturbing for me and of course for all of us. Besides that, our tour van's fan broke down on the way from Arendal in the south of Norway to Sandviken in the middle of Sweden on a sixteen hours drive in negative 20 degrees Celsius (that's *fucking cold*) with a snowstorm, driving on really small roads. This means we had to drive for at least ten hours with all the windows rolled down to not have steam all over the windows. We came to Sandviken two hours after the show ended in Sandviken after being in this cold fucking tour van for sixteen hours, with constant fighting about everything. We drove the van like this the rest of the tour and even the nine hours drive back to Umeå. Besides that we also got to sleep at a newly squatted house in Oslo with dogs shitting all over the floor, people having a big rave and taking shitloads of pills and shit. I just wanted to kill myself or at least fly home. But we made it. After that tour, I know I can handle what the hell ever happens in the future.

...THE DOCTORS WERE REALLY CONCERNED AND TOLD HIM IN BAD ENGLISH MIXED WITH GERMAN THAT HE MIGHT HAVE TWISTED HIS TESTICLES AND THEY HAVE TO CUT HIM UP TO HAVE A LOOK IMMEDIATELY.

MRR: Fuck! Doesn't sound like the best tour ever. But maybe one of those things you see more as an experience after it ends, right? But both you and Sara are still in Auktion so I guess you don't fight constantly anymore?

Potin: Yeah, of course. I think the worst things happening on tour makes the best tour stories and are the things you will have the strongest memories of, so I'm not really sad that it happened. At least I never have to do that one again. But if it happens, it's something you might have to count on: playing punk rock and just affording cheap buses. About me and Sara, we live together at the moment in the same collective and have no problems playing together in the same band. I think the whole problem was that it was just so short a time after the breakup. We are really good friends now, maybe better than under our relationship.

MRR: That's great then. Tell me about future releases!

Potin: We have just recorded seven new songs and we disagree a little on what we thing about the sound, but I really like it. Sounds a lot like the LP/CD, but more like we do live as well, which is good of course. The songs are going on two split 7"s, one with Black Panda from La Coruna in Spain. Incredible D-beat band, also with a lot of rock 'n' roll influences, reminding me of Uncurbed a lot. We hope to do a tour with them next year as well. I don't know which label is releasing it, they are taking care of the whole thing. The other split 7" is with Mass Separation from Malaysia, and it's coming out in December/ January on Fight For Your Mind in France and Assel Records in Germany. Steve from Visions Of War is making the artwork which I'm really psyched about because he is an amazing crust/punk artist. We are doing this release as a part of a plan to tour Southeast Asia and Australia next summer. One previously unreleased song is coming out any day now as well on Fight For Your Mind Records. It's on the compilation *El Libertario* benefit CD which is released as a benefit for El Libertario. Buy it when it's out (probably at the same time as this interview is out). In February we will try to record a new LP as well, and maybe if we have enough songs we'll record for another split 7" as well.

MRR: So you are doing Southeast Asia and Australia; how did you get that idea?

Potin: I've been in contact with Kid from Mass Separation for several years now, talking about us doing a tour there, and we have just waited for the right moment and getting "big" enough. This fall and winter a lot of tapes, CD-Rs, comps, etc., will be released there as promotion for this tour. Yeap from Pisschrist is doing the Australian part for us. I really don't know so much right now, but we plan to be there both June and July of 2007. We are finishing off a tour of Europe in May and doing a couple of Scandinavia shows in the end of this year and the beginning of next year hopefully. For you Southeast Asians reading this, contact Kid or Yeap for more info! They probably know more about this than I.

MRR: So you have a lot coming up, that's great. So I just have to ask you about politics as well. You consider yourselves to be a political band: is that right? In which ways are you politically active?

Potin: I guess you can say that. I think we consider ourselves to be some kind of anarcho-punk band when it comes to the lyrics, but I don't really like to put bands into compartments and especially not my own bands. I think this of course depends a lot on how you see politics. Some of the members in Auktion are really active in the DIY/punk communities and the organization Umeå Hardcore doing shows, festivals and stuff like that, which I consider like political work for me. We are at the moment starting up an all-punk youth center in Umeå that is going to start have shows in 2007 if everything goes in the right directions. Besides that, some of us are active with SAC (the syndicalist/anarchist union in Sweden) as well as antifascism through Antifascist Action, etc., etc. So yes,

in some way or another most of us are politically active, but I think Auktion as a band is less of a political action. You get the point.

MRR: So this youth center, what is that? How did you get that idea and is it really possible to do it without squatting or something like that?
Potin: In Sweden it's really hard to squat a building, probably a lot harder than it even is in most of the US. The Swedish police have zero tolerance with squatters and attack hard with tear-gas, automatic weapons, etc. every time we try to do something like this, without caring about who is in there and why there are people in there. There have been really ugly situations with a lot of the squatters getting serious jail time, people get hurt and so on. The punk scene in Umeå at the moment is really amazing, there are about 100,000 inhabitants here and between 60-250 people at all the shows, even on weekdays, at least 50% of them are under 18 and I think now also 50% of the crowd are girls/women which is really good! Like it should be. For a couple of years, there has been talk about starting up our own place like a "punk house" or the punk squats in Central Europe, in Umeå. But as the situation is with squatting here, we had to try the legal way and this spring a couple of friends from the Umeå hardcore organization and I started to make a plan for how to do this. It is really moving forward from day to day now and I think if we are lucky we will get a house from the state in the beginning of 2007 to start work. This will be the first place like this ever to exist in Sweden, so I really hope we can make it work! You will hear more about this later for sure!

MRR: All the luck to you with the work, then! Now we end this interview with some short questions: why the name Auktion?
Potin: Actually, I don't remember and I don't care. At first when you are a small band, people think your name sucks, but when you start to get "bigger" it's all of a sudden OK, because people get used to hearing it. I think we have released enough records with this name to not care to change it, but it means "auction" in English, like eBay you know. Someone else gets to make a rumor about it..

MRR: Best gig ever?
Potin: Crustmas in Copenhagen, Juzi in Göttingen and Be Part Fest in Stuttgart.

MRR: Best song of your own?
Potin: I really like one of the new ones... I have to say "Kopps," "Burning Police Cars" and "En Ny Generation Av Stöveltramp." Those, I'm really proud of!

MRR: Worst thing in/about the punk scene?
Potin: Elitism, like people who think they have some kind of punk rock VIP for playing in the right bands, writing for the right fanzine, etc. And also, people ripping other people off in DIY communities. Happens all the time, but so sad every time. And of course people pretending to be PC and later they rape, or beat their girlfriends, or just are plain assholes. That's probably the thing that gets me so sad, I don't really know what to do. You think you can trust people within our communities or at least you want to, but some assholes just never stop proving you wrong.

MRR: Favorite Food?
Potin: For me, that must me a good pasta salad with tofu and olives. I just love to cook and eat! When I became vegan about three years ago, that was a big changing point in my look on food.

MRR: Last words?
Take care, hugs and peace.

http://www.myspace.com/auktion
(mp3s, tour dates, pictures, info etc)
potinhc@hotmail.com

AUKTION

SEVERED HEAD OF STATE

STORMCROW

all photos: will kinser

LEBENDEN TOTEN

BOMBENALARM

The first time I saw this band, I was blown away: four Latina/Chicana women playing hardcore punk in South Gate. Hell, yeah. I knew I had to get to know them better. These ladies not only play hardcore punk rock but also are activists within their communities for women's rights, human rights, and immigrant rights. On top of going to universities, film school, and working, these gals still find time to get together to write, record, play, and put on shows in South Gate, to help out other bands. You must know about them, so without further ado, here is
Interview and introduction by Renae Bryant. Photos by Old HC Dude.

Bruise Violet

MRR: Introduce yourselves and let us know what you do in the band.
Bruise Violet: If we were a family, Mayra would be the mom, Daisy would be the child with ADHD, Vanessa is the sarcastically blunt sibling that doesn't know what she wants but wants it all, and Vero is the dad that tries not to get involved but uses her googly eyes to make it all better.
MRR: South Gate is maybe the last place that some people would expect an all female/Latina hardcore feminist punk band to rise up. Tell us a little bit about how the band came together and what influenced you all to start the band.
Bruise Violet: First of all, South Gate has always been cracking! We were influenced by bands like Schizm, Los Mugrosos, Left Out, Public Manifest, Maldicion, Los Chosen Rejects, and Chaos Our Way. South Gate always had great energy, so it was really easy for bands to form. Mayra started a band in 1999 and members came and went in that band. It fell apart and we all ended coming together through our friends. We all ended up wanting to be in a band that influenced more women to participate in music. But really, we're all about having fun and we all think that all these labels on both music and beliefs just end up segregating us more in the long run.Yes, were female and Latina or Hispanic or Chicana/o or Brown or Purple or aware of sexism in the world around us, but adding all these labels just ends up segregating us. The band is really about playing music and writing lyrics that talk about our views and experiences in life, along with keeping it fun!
MRR: Tell us about the name Bruise Violet.
Bruise Violet: Bruise Violet is a Babes in Toyland song. It was either that or Emily Rugburn but the sexual comments got very annoying very fast. The name really refers to "bruising violet."
MRR: For the Bruise Violet Puts Out EP, what influenced you lyrically?
Daisy: Some of the things that influenced us were other bands, lifestyles, frustration, books, experiences, and issues, like how common rape is nowadays. The song "Number Two" really meant a lot to me because after going to a play, The Vagina Monologues, the audience was asked to stand if they had been raped or knew someone who had been raped; more than half the audience stood up. "Under the Influence" was about seeing people drink away their lack of self-esteem. We called the demo B.V. Puts Out because we heard girls put out, so we were like,"hell yeah, Bruise Violet puts out" a demo!?
MRR: It has been more than fifteen years since the first riot grrls strapped on guitars and armed themselves with pen and paper. How did you discover riot grrl and how do those bands influence you now?
Bruise Violet: Ironically, most of us found out about riot grrl bands through our guy friends. These bands still influence us because we are still part of a predominantly male punk scene. The movement is definitely a confidence booster.

MRR: Do you think there is a chance for another wave of riot grrls, similar to the waves of feminism throughout history?
Bruise Violet: Then are women in music always in waves and males the only consistent thing in music? When is music going to take on women in music as a norm? We believe the riot grrl movement was great and the bands that came out of it were amazing, but calling this a riot grrl movement is just another label segregating and differentiating women in the scene. We don't really think bands like Bikini Kill, Sleater-Kinney, and Bratmobile actually called themselves riot grrls. They just wanted to play, do something progressive, and evoke change.
MRR: I know this band is made up of activists. Could you tell us a little about what you have been involved in within the past year?
Bruise Violet: We all just grew up in poor communities and we talk about issues that we see around us. We like to help other people out as we would like others to help us if we were in similar situations. Some of the things that we have done are support the South Central Farm, New Orleans Katrina Relief work, Global Night Commute, and become mentors to younger kids in low socio-economic conditions or as the government calls them "at-risk youth". But really, can't anyone be active by just trying not to litter or recycling or reusing a piece of paper?
MRR: I am a white girl who teaches English Learners. I am pissed, on fire with all this "immigration issue" bullshit that was manufactured by Lou Dobbs on CNN and the KKK, I mean the Minutemen. Please tell us what it has been like being in the center of such amazing activism with the Latino/Chicano and immigrant population coming out in full force activism. Were you able to participate in these actions?
Bruise Violet: Being in Los Angeles during all of this has been amazing and sad at the same time. It has been amazing because seeing so many people together on the streets marching for the same cause has been very inspiring. On the other hand, it has been sad because supposedly we live in a very progressive society, yet we're taking huge steps back. It seems as though people only do things when it's at their convenience. One quote that we saw on signs throughout the marches that especially stood out was Martin Niemöller's poem that he wrote during WWII. It makes you think: "First they came for the Socialists, and I didn't speak up, because I wasn't a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I didn't speak up, because I wasn't a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up, because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak up for me."
MRR: This band is separated during the academic year by school. Could you discuss what each of you is involved in during the school year?
Bruise Violet: We are huge commuters of Los Angeles. Mayra goes to school at CSU Dominguez Hills, lives in Long Beach and works for a community college as an Audio Visual Technician. Vanessa is an art student by day and a barista at an independent café (Café Kashmir is an awesome space) at night. Daisy goes to UCSD. Veronica just finished her bachelors and is moving on to her masters, is a mentor to kids, and works with Daisy at a brutal-ass art community center collective in L.A.

MRR: How have you been accepted with in the male dominated scene of hardcore punk?
Bruise Violet: Como princesas.
MRR: Have you had any problems because you call yourselves feminists?
Bruise Violet: This is a pretty weird question. Do you ask guy bands the same question? Some of us call ourselves feminist, some of us don't. But we all believe in equal opportunity for all people. One of the problems we have run into is that people assume we hate men because we have played some all-female shows. But we don't hate men. And we don't see anything wrong with playing some all-girls shows either.
MRR: I actually have asked male dominated bands how they are received as feminists, homo-core bands, activists, anarchists, etc. There isn't a male equivalent term to feminist because this is a patriarchal WASP society that we live in. With so many women in the media denying feminism because they don't want to appear to be dykes or male bashers, I think it's important to keep the term alive and in the media for young girls to read. Language is powerful and we need to use the terms feminist and humanist to define ourselves because we still do not have equal rights, nor are human rights a guarantee for all. When that day happens, I'll be glad to hang up the "title". Moving along, what inspired you to learn and play the Salt-N-Pepa cover, "Push It"?
Mayra: I went to go see the Roots and was literally blown away. They played quick 15 second covers of bands like Nirvana, The Doors, Bad Religion, and Salt-N-Pepa and it reminded me how much I used to love that song. So I went home and learned it on guitar and asked the girls if we could cover it.
Vanessa: And coincidently I had just read Salt-N-Pepa's chapter in Cinderella's Big Score, so I was super duper inspired and excited.
MRR: What other bands are you listening to right now that you want to turn the MRR readers on to?
Bruise Violet: In Disgust, Schizm, Hit Me Back, Yellow Machinegun, Son De Madera, the Dresden Dolls, Tegan and Sara, Defiance Ohio, This Is My Fist, Sin Remedio, Mika Miko, Out To Get You, our girlfriends from Chicago, Condenada, and many more.
MRR: What does the future hold for Bruise Violet?
Bruise Violet: A split with Out To Get You, our split on On The Rag, touring, scratch and sniff stickers, a new bass amp and maybe a second guitarist. Oh, and choreographed moves!
MRR: Anything else you want the MRR readers to know about Bruise Violet?
Bruise Violet: We want to play more shows, so hook us up!!

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ÜDDEUTSCHES HARDCORE MAGAZIN JULI

TRUST

NR.1 2,50

In July, 1986, the first issue of *Trust* fanzine was released. Written in German and put together by a dedicated group of German DIY punkers, *Trust* took its cues from '80s zines *TVOR*, *Maximum Rocknroll*, and *Ripper,* and covered both the German and international punk and hardcore scenes. In the late '80s, *Trust* and *Maximum Rocknroll* collaborated on the *Welcome to Cruise Country* European photo zine, cementing the now long-standing relationship between the two zines.

Since then, Dolf Hermannstaedter and a revolving cast of volunteers have continued putting the zine together and getting it out. Recently, *Trust* celebrated it's twenty year anniversary, and while the focus of the zine isn't exclusively on the hard-core punk scene that it once gave it's primary coverage too, Dolf and the crew remain fervently opinionated, political, and dedicated to DIY publishing and non-mainstream music writing. This interview was conducted earlier this month with Dolf over a series of emails by Golnar Nikpour. Introduction by Golnar Nikpour. All graphics courtesy of *Trust* fanzine.

Tell us about the very origins of *Trust*. First the basics—year it started, who was involved, etc—and also why do the zine in the first place?
In the '80s, we had meetings of Southern German hardcore activists in Heidenheim. We had a "big one" in early 1986, when we decided/agreed that we needed a fanzine, that came out on a regular basis. Remember back then, there was no media interest in the music or ideas we where into. The starting core of *Trust* was six people. Over the years people split, and nowadays only Mitch (he does most of the layout) and me are left. Of course, other people have come and gone to the zine during these past twenty years.

Was *Trust* always an international zine? Or did it begin with a focus on the German scene?
It was always international in the sense of writing about international bands, topics, etc. In the first years its subtitle was "Süddeutsches Hardcoremagazin" (south German hardcore magazine), which was just because all the founding members where from the south. Some people hated us for that, they accused us of thinking we are "better" than them and other shit. Also calling a zine magazine back then was a step in the "right" direction, where as in nowadays you need to ensure you are a fanzine...

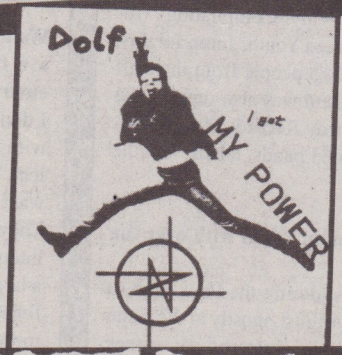
What was the purpose of *Trust* at the beginning? Did you have certain goals for the zine? What is the purpose of doing it now?
It was to have a regularly appearing zine in which we could express our ideas and share information with other people interested in the same things. The goal also was to publish on a regular basis (bi-monthly).

Nowadays it is done because I still love to do it. We are the only remaining "big zine" that is not controlled by the music industry (that includes all majors, but also all independent, punk labels); we work with almost all of them, but not on a "trade ad for article" basis. *Trust* is doing "outgoing journalism" (that means the writers decide what they wanna write about) not "incoming journalism" (where labels or PR/promo people decide what is going to be in the publication).

What were the zines early influences in zine-making (layout, coverage, etc.)?
That is simple to answer: *Ripper, MRR, Flipside, TVOR* and a few German zines.

What about now? What fanzines or magazines inspire your current work with *Trust*?
Maybe the question should be what other magazines *don't* inspire me. The answer to that is almost all music magazines. Just this year I saw my first couple of issues of *Adbusters*; that magazine is very interesting. I don't know the mag well enough yet, but it seems they have something good going with great graphics.

***Maximum Rocknroll* famously won't cover major label bands or bands outside of the scope of the "punk" sound, though *Trust* is different. What are the boundaries of what *Trust* will cover?**
We have no problem with major label bands or bands outside of the punk sound. As long as a writer is interested and it somehow fits *Trust*, we publish it. There is so much interesting stuff out there, and we don't wanna limit ourselves. Of course there are limits to what you will find in *Trust*—no stupid, boring bands that we don't wanna cover.



Do you feel that covering major label bands has ever diluted your coverage?
No, not at all, because *we* decide if and when we want to cover a major band and *how* we cover them.

Do you, Dolf, make all of the final decisions on what bands you will and won't cover?
Yes and no. If a writer suggests a band I feel doesn't need to be in *Trust*, I ask why he/she wants to cover the band in *Trust*. Usually they either have a good reason (I then give them the green light) or they understand that it was a not such good idea.

Are majors or indies more guilty of attempting to pressure you into "incoming journalism?"
The "pressure" comes from both sides, but most of the labels know by now that we don't really believe in "incoming journalism" though, if someone asks nicely if we might be interested in interviewing this or that band, there is nothing wrong with that. But nobody can put pressure on us.

How many people work on a given issue of the fanzine? What is the average production cycle like?
There is a "core staff" of five-six people and about fifteen others that do something whenever they feel like. *Trust* is differently structured than for example *MRR*, in that we don't have an HQ where people come to review stuff, write, etc. There are a few writers here in this city, but most of them are spread out all over Germany. I do all the shitwork by myself, though when the new issue needs to be sent out I have help from one-to-three guys here in Bremen. I send out review material to writers, then I get text back in, read that and send it to Mitch for layout. Meanwhile I try to get ads, and shortly before the deadline I do the tour dates (those are collected all the time) and the news (usually together with Stone, a long-time writer from Bremen). I also try to have a good cover. Mitch puts together the zine, and brings a CD-R to the printer in Augsburg. The printer then ships the majority of the zines to our distro and some up to Bremen.

How many hours a week do you wind up working on Trust?
I never counted the hours. It is way more two weeks before a deadline then it is right after an issue is done. Have you ever counted your hours at *MRR*? I would say about the same...

How much has the zine changed since those early issues? One of the inspiring things about *Trust* for me is seeing that the core values of the fanzine are very much in line with those classic issues, but surely some things have changed, even if only aesthetically?
The major changes where going from typewriter to computer. Then years later, going from cut and paste to do layout on the computer. Also we opened up for all kinds of interesting music.

not only hardcore/punk. In the beginning we would not run ads of major labels, we changed that policy, since it did not make any sense anymore to us. The idea of the content is still the same. A good mix of music and socio-political issues. Then starting the train station distribution, having a bar code on the cover (no problem, it was just a change...). Also the paper changed a couple of times. The paper we use now is best, since it looks great, but is 100% recycled.

Trust and _Maximum Rocknroll_ have had a long relationship. How did _Trust_ hook up with _Maximum Rocknroll_ to release the _Welcome to Cruise Country_ photo zine? Has _Trust_ collaborate with other international fanzines on projects like that one?
That was the only collaboration with other zines. I was reading *MRR* since the early '80s and got in touch with Tim via writing letters (back then I was also selling *MRR* at gigs....). Then I lived at the *MRR* house for almost three months in '86 and visited a few times more after that. Tim always wanted to do a photozine, we were also into the idea. There was also Helge, who was another collaborator in the project. Too bad it is sold out.

You lived at the MRR house? What was the purpose? Just to hang out? Did you do shitwork for the magazine?
The purpose was punk. I was doing shitwork almost daily, I helped in building up Gilman Street, I helped doing the radio show. Of course, I also checked out the city/country, went to a lot of punk gigs, met people, drank beer, and such. The purpose was to meet the American hardcore punks —that is what I did.

Trust has also released records, correct? I am thinking in particular of an excellent comp 7" with Spermbirds, Skeeziks, and others. Tell us about those projects.
Trust never really released records. We had two flexis with the zine in the early days. There was also that comp, but it was more a "presentation" than a actual release...

A presentation...?
It was just a way to make the name *Trust* more public. On the 7" it says "X-Mist & Remedy Records presents: *TRUST* Vinyl-Compilation" (for the record, the bands: Challenger Crew, Unwanted Youth, Jump for Joy, Anti Toxin, Spermbirds, Skeezicks, P.M.A.). Two people from the staff back then played in two of the bands; one of them was also running the label. It was a joint release by X-Mist and Remedy Records, it was nothing "special"—it was just a project of befriended bands, labels, and the zine.

What other non-zine projects has _Trust_ been involved with over the years?
We did "*Trust* evenings" in Cologne for years, during the Popkomm (a music trade fair, not punk...). It was always in August, mostly at the same venue we invited three-four bands and had a big gig/party, sometimes sold out to almost 1000 people, sometimes not. We also did single "*Trust* gigs" in Frankfurt, and Bremen.

Where do you see how _Trust_ fits into the German punk scene, past and present?
We don't really fit the punk scene in the past, nor will we fit now. The "punk scene" has changed over the last two decades so many times in so many different ways, though we are still here, with the same goals.

What are the great German bands of the present? Are there bands that are shamefully overlooked by the international scene?
There are a few great German bands and many good ones, I will not mention any names, otherwise the list would need to be too long....

You recently celebrated twenty years of _Trust_ fanzine. How long do you plan on keeping the zine going? What would make you stop?
There is no plan. When we run out of money (that would be if we don't have enough ads in anymore), it is going to stop. When there are no more writers that can fill the zine with good content, when I start getting bored by it, it might stop. In other words, it might be dead by the time this is printed (which I really don't hope or see happening....!!!) or it might go on and on....

What are your favorite interviews or features that _Trust_ has run? Why?
Recently we had a really great article by a person who has read the zine since it beginnings and work for the UN in Afghanistan to coordinate the recent election. I liked that, because all the other info you get about that region, is from people who are professional journalists, while this guy has a good attitude, plays in a band, and has a years long HC background. There are too many other favourites over the last 20 years to mention.

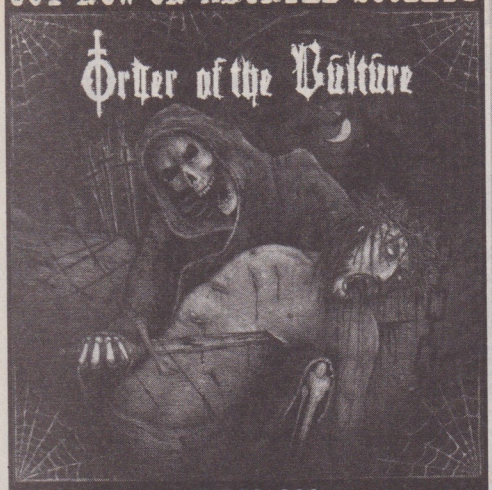
How does _Trust_ function financially? Is it a struggle? Does anyone make a salary off of the zine? Has it become harder or easier for the zine to exist since the '80s?
Nobody makes a salary of the zine. It is a struggle, but at this point it still manages to finance itself. I think it is harder because fewer people are interested in ideas, even though more people look and listen to punk.

If you could draw a salary from Trust, would you? Or is the decision to pour all of the money from the magazine back into itself a decision based on some ethical principle?
Since there is so little money involved with *Trust* (any patron out there that want to help us?!), this question is quite theoretical. But in general, I would say yes, since I put so much of my time in it. The "problems" that would/could start if I made a salary—while there is no question that I put the most in, and therefore should be the first to get something out—is that it could cause more problems. Writers/photographers would maybe also like to make money. Therefore they would maybe write about more popular bands for the wrong reasons: money. In general there is always a danger once money is involved.

Would it be possible for something like _Trust_ to begin today? Or are the many "scenes" too divided for new, bigger zines to emerge that cover a wide section of things effectively?
I don't think it would be possible. It is hard enough to keep going with a 20-year history. I don't think it is so much of a "scene problem," it is more that people are not really interested anymore, they want to have easy entertainment rather than have deeper insights. They want to read about things they already know (from TV or the internet), that is, if they read at all. Plus for a new starting zine on a larger scale it would be impossible to not depend on the "trade ad for interview" game. Therefore, most/all of the newer mags zines more or less suck. It is crazy, but there is hardly any music journalism anymore, it is all controlled by the release schedules of record companies or tour schedules of concert agencies. But, it also seems that people don't care about that fact, because if you speak about it, they (the "journalists, " "zine makers", etc.) are neither embarrassed about the situation and their readers are not interested in such things. Sad. Of course, I am speaking about bigger, glossy music mags, not real zines. Sorry, I got carried away...

Thanks for doing the interview, Dolf. Any last words?
Eat vegetarian, live atheistic, be fair and honest, don't believe everything the media tells you, be critical, have your own taste, don't buy so much shit you don't really need, reuse & recycle, avoid cars—bicycle, start non-commercial networks, live professional, don't judge human beings by race, gender, or where they come from (most people are shit, no matter where they come from), but based on what they do and believe. Fuck fashion and don't forget to party and have fun.

OUT NOW ON ABORTED SOCIETY



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7 tracks of haunting, metal influenced d-beat hardcore punk from Portland, OR. Dark, ethereal crust from the netherworld.

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Meisce EP

S.L.T.N. / Meat of Mankind – split 7"

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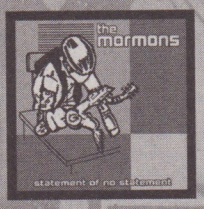

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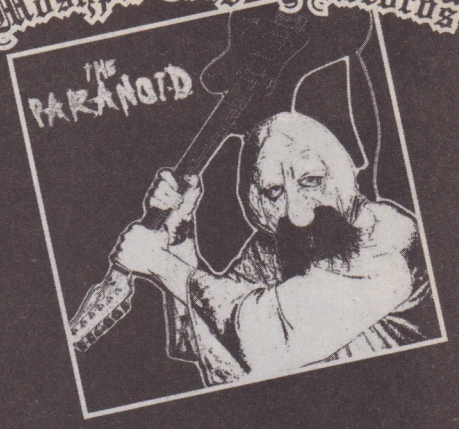

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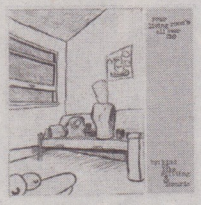

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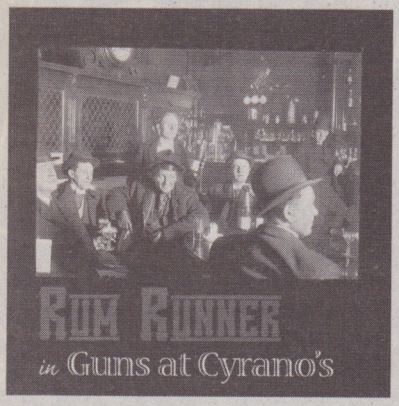

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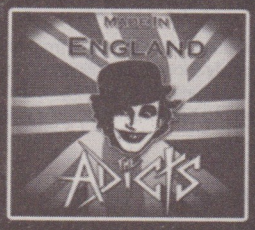

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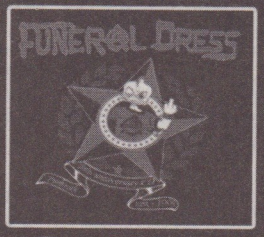

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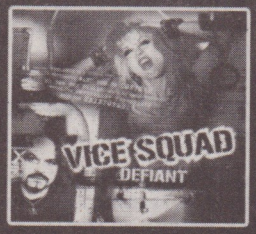

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You're Not Moving the Way You're Supposed To

an introduction to

the homosexuals

photo courtesy of Chuck Warner

an essay by Ethan Clarke

THE Homosexuals

Bundled up in the singing voice of Bruno Wizard, founder of the Homosexuals, is all of the accusatory sharpness of 1960s garage, all the exploratory beat-riding of Jamaican toasting, and the petulant swagger of glam. But on "My Night Out," the first song on their only LP, he sings like a man being strangled. The words rip out of his throat like final pleas, almost indecipherable without a lyric sheet. Behind him a guitar line dances along with a sharp, slippery glee, the same tautness as Wire but with a vulnerability that makes "12XU" sound inhuman and cold. And then the drums! Bursting in with all the energy of a marching band, always on the verge but never stumbling, again with a grinning edge that makes the whole song feel like a chorus with Bruno finally in control of himself, barking out "my night out BIG FUN/my night out BIG FUN BIG FUN." And in sixty-seven seconds the whole thing is over, and it's only the first song on the record.

The members of the Homosexuals were there at the genesis of punk; In January of 1977, five days after forming their first band, The Rejects, they played with the Damned. Subsequent shows included nights at the Roxy opening for X-Ray Spex and the Jam, with Bruno singing from behind a leather bondage mask, kicking over drums and amps, eagerly counting down the days to Armageddon. But the venues and the customs all felt too restraining, and more important than their participation in the first wave of punk was their participation in the first wave of the rejection of punk. While Sex Pistols and the Clash were signing major label contracts, The Rejects re-named themselves The Homosexuals, chasing away all the label scouts and their dollar-sign eyes. At the same time as the initial rebellion deteriorated into a uniform, and creativity was being stomped out of punk, The Homosexuals blossomed by doing everything themselves, shamelessly rejecting the stylistic codes and opening up a whole new possibility.

In fact, it's the truest, most consistent mark throughout their career, this do-it-yourself conviction. Musically and visually, it's astonishing to realize the diversity of their output—they could just as easily descend into Velvet Underground-inspired feedback drones as they could slash their way through minute-long killers. Graphically, the aesthetic was just as varied, and while the "Hearts in Exile" single echoes the stark, minimal design favored by their post-punk peers (i.e. This Heat, Joy Division), the L. Voag 7" features an over-bright, hand-painted sleeve, a crowded assault of color. Regardless of the specific communication being made through each record, this homemade, non-commodifiable aspect remained at the heart of every expression.

Certainly in today's underground community it can be difficult to imagine the impact of a 7" with a handmade cover, or recognize how breathtakingly new this rebellion sounded. But mainstream media had seen the threat posed by punk and was very quickly defusing it by making the movement into teen craze, draining the politics and accentuating the fashion. The Homosexuals began a multi-layered attack that undid every tactic of co-optation and taming that the media was using against them. The fractured catchiness of their songs was tremendously subversive: luring listeners with one hand and striking out at them with the other. Records were issued with multiple sleeves, without band names, without documentation, denying the rigorous cataloging that record shops and magazine reviewers demanded. Even their recording process undermined the system, as they would sneak into the studio after hours, using tape and labor paid for by bigger bands who had quit before their allotted time was through.

But perhaps their most important act during this time was one of inspiration. The story of the Sex Pistols first show spurring hundreds of kids to start their own groups is a potent legend, but it's hard to imagine the factory printed covers and studio photography of their subsequent records moving anyone to form a band. However, the handmade jackets and freeform structure of Homosexuals releases guaranteed that every listener who came in contact with the band could see firsthand that the materials were within anyone's reach, fiercely announcing the possibility of making a record on your own terms.

Having freed themselves from the new discipline of this scrubbed-clean punk, The Homosexuals were able to renew this vibrant energy, even as other bands traded it in for a costume. The initial, unabashed lawlessness that defined the opening moments of punk always stayed at the forefront of their sound, and there isn't a single second of their discography that doesn't carry a shadowy threat. Even in their catchiest, most melodic songs, a darkness lurks, ready to spring forth in condemnation and despair.

The song "Astral Glamour" shows The Homosexuals at their brightest pop sheen, with harmonized vocals that recall the most amped-up Kinks songs and steadily chiming guitars that sound almost majestic in their sweep. It's the type of song that seduces listeners on the first take, melodic and dynamic and lovably unruly, like a tipsy friend. Accented with street corner-ish "ooh-wees" and hoots and laughter, "Astral Glamour" feels like a party worth joining, but as soon as you're hooked it flashes its darkness, reeling off lists of opulence. "Picasso! Lamborghini, Coke and dry martini!" The Homosexuals know you're smart, and so they're not going to yell at you about your materialistic desires, but it's not long before you're wondering what it is that you want out of this life. It can be a fearsome blow, depending on where you're standing.

astral glamour

THE Homosexuals

mour asTral glamour

The best example of this sneak-attack politic can be found in the opening track "My Night Out." The late 1970s in England were unbearably desperate times, and hatred and fear were at an absolute high. The National Front, a far-right political party that acted as a cover for English neo-Nazi activity, was expanding its numbers every day. In 1977 Bruno was a part of the active resistance against this movement, and while protesting a National Front rally, was arrested for hurling paving stones at the police protecting the march. A year later, the Homosexuals write "My Night Out," a heartbroken tribute to their one-time drummer Nyrup Reddi, who died after being slashed with a broken bottle. The half-Pakistani Nyrup was singled out in a fight by National Front thugs because of the color of his skin. And suddenly the desolate shrieks at the opening of "My Night Out" focus; the gasped words "synchronized attack" forming a dark, harrowing image; the sarcasm of "BIG FUN BIG FUN" as sharp as the jagged glass that took away their friend.

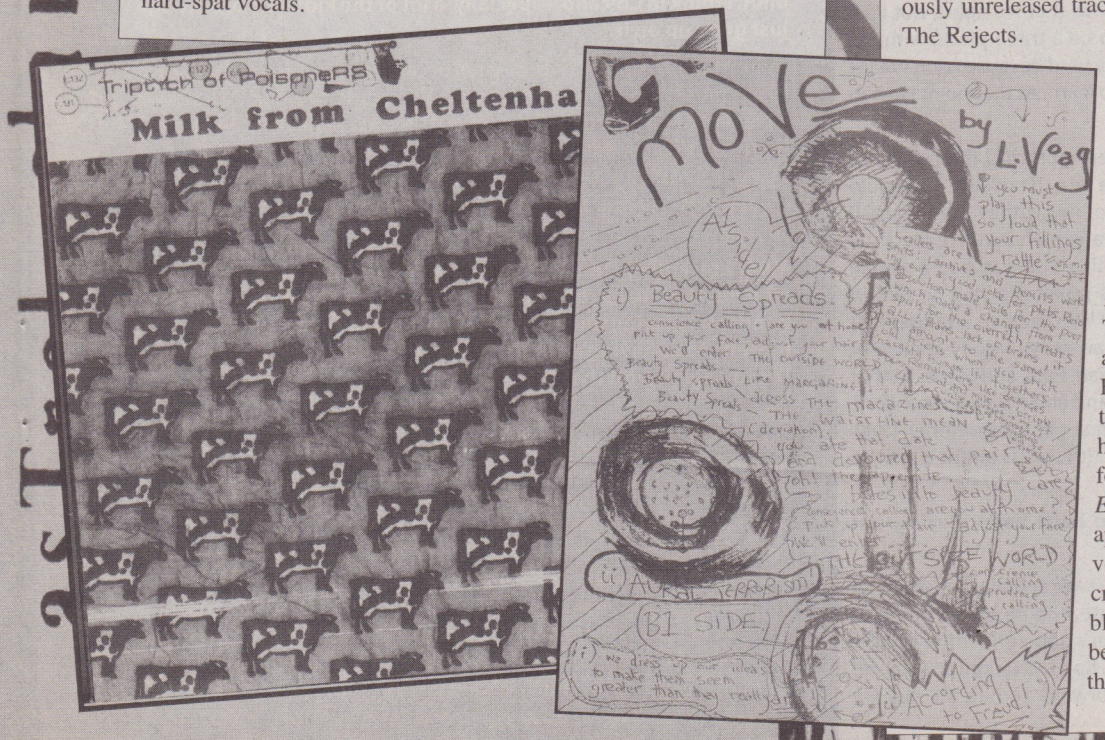
The Homosexuals program was an attack on all fronts, a rejection for sure, but just as much an affirmation in the joy of stepping away from the racket to create something new. In only a few years they created a massive body of work—between half a dozen identities and two record labels they created over twenty releases, with a staggering diversity and brilliance. They covered enough ground to make their movement seem like an army. They wanted to do everything, and, although no one ever could've suspected it, everything was within their reach. In 1982, they issued a statement that ended with this declaration: "The music will be there to remind and say what we perhaps did not have time to." And so twenty-five years later it's no surprise that we can still look to these recordings for lessons, for inspiration and for a damaged beauty that few bands have been able to approach.

Starting in 2004, the Homosexuals have begun to oversee reissues of their material on CD, making these recordings available on a worldwide scale for the first time ever.

What follows is an annotated discography of all of the Homosexuals (and close family) releases currently in print.

The Homosexuals CD (Morphius)

This CD is a re-mastered edition of *The Homosexuals Record* as released in 1984. This disc is the most vicious, snarling document of their work, twenty-one tracks of jagged guitar and hard-spat vocals.



Includes lyrics and excellent liner notes by Chris Cutler (who issued the original Homosexuals Record on his Recommended Records label).

The Homosexuals – *Astral Glamour* 3 x CD (Messthetics)

The definitive collection of The Homosexuals, this triple CD contains every song issued on vinyl and cassette by the Homosexuals from 1978-1982, as well as unreleased tracks. 81 songs, including every track from The Homosexuals CD, the entire George Harassment LP (Anton's solo release), and live tracks. The tracks are wildly diverse, with short, erratic punk songs, buzzing, hypnotic psychedelics, and some remarkably hooky pop songs. The 32-page booklet is full of biographical information and plenty of photographs.

Milk From Cheltenham – *Triptych of Poisoners* (Alga Marghen)

Quite possibly the most difficult of the Homosexuals-related material, Milk From Cheltenham dealt in dark echoing vocals, nightmarish textures, chiming bells like children's stories gone awry. Originally released as an edition of 300 LPs on It's War, Boys, the label headed by Jim Welton of the Homosexuals. Lepke Buchvalter of Milk from Cheltenham and Jim now play together in the group Die Trip Computer Die.

L. Voag – *The Way Out* (Alchohol)

In 1980, the members of The Homosexuals each worked on solo recordings—Anton made the George Harrassment LP, Bruno released a single as Sirk Alick & the Phraser, and Jim recorded an LP and an EP as L. Voag. The L. Voag material is both immediate and complex; the songs carry an intense perversion of pop music modes, with everything from show tunes to disco falling prey to his distortions. There are also a couple of tightly-wound rock songs that jangle and scratch with an energy that predicts bands like the Pixies nearly ten years in advance.

Various Artists – *Messthetics Greatest Hits* CD (Messthetics)

On the same label as the "Astral Glamour" set, this compilation of UK DIY music from 1977-1980 features two previously unreleased tracks by the pre-Homosexuals punk group The Rejects.

The Homosexuals – *Live at the Whiskey/Demos* CD (Messthetics)

This CD has just been announced by Messthetics for an early 2007 release. Check www.hyped2death.com for updates.

In 2004 Bruno Wizard arrived in America to play a weekend of shows as The Homosexuals, nearly twenty years after his final performance in 1986. Bruno and Anton have been recording together, and quite recently three songs have been made available online from a forthcoming Homosexuals release titled *EPic*. A cold wryness is immediately apparent, and Bruno's command of his vocals has grown immensely. As he croons "Moving through life is incredible," it's easy to recall the uneasy balance between pop and darkness that colored their entire career.

THE EFFIGIES

In the last few years, Chicago's Effigies have come out of retirement, gigging around town and the Midwest. One of the first Chicago punk bands to make a mark outside of their local scene, the Effigies' sound—a blend of influences ranging from The Ruts and Dils to non-punk dance music—has remained unique and relevant. This past March, they made the trek down to Austin, TX to play a showcase at the annual South By Southwest music conference. I had a chance to sit with singer John Kezdy—in his car, in a parking lot a few blocks away from the gig—to ask him about the state of the band, a bit of their history, and about what's been on his mind. Interview and introduction by Dave Hyde with major behind the scenes help from Graham Booth and Sarah Janet.

MRR: What motivated you guys to start playing again in the last couple of years?

John: I didn't intend to ever be in a band again. I thought I had more music left to make, but I never thought the reality of it was that I was gonna be in a band again, and I don't think I've ever been able to imagine myself in any band other than the Effigies.

MRR: Were you in any bands before the Effigies?

John: They were just proto-Effigies bands. Steve and I were neighbors and friends from way back. We tried to get a band going with friends of ours, mainly, but they never quite caught up to the point with us where they were serious enough about actually getting a band going. We essentially dropped out of college to form the band. By process of elimination, we picked up Paul at some point. He used to always come up to me and ask if I was getting a band started, because we'd talked about it before. But I didn't know him, I'd just met him. Finally we ended up hooking up together with him and this other guy who was always hanging around O'Banion's, which was one of the bars in Chicago. We had a serious disagreement at some point so that fell apart, but Paul came right back to us. It was supposed to be a three-piece, with me playing guitar and singing, which was really hard because I don't really know how to play guitar, but I was trying to learn. At that point we had a lot of forward momentum.

We ended up meeting Earl at this sort of after-hours club, this no license club in Chicago. It was at that point in the late '70s where you could just look at somebody and tell what kind of music they listened to. If someone was wearing a leather jacket in a certain context, instantly you knew this was a punk rocker and nothing else. Earl had a couple of badges, especially a Ruts badge on his jacket. He said he played guitar, and I said, "Why don't you come in?" We made an arrangement for him to come in the next day, and right away everybody knew that it clicked. So that was our first lineup: me, Earl, Paul, and Steve. At that point everybody knew that we were the band and it was gonna work, and we just got to practicing. We did our first gig in November 1980, so this would have been late 1979, I think. It took us about a year to actually get a full set together and play.

MRR: Is that the same four people who have been playing out together recently?

John: The difference is that Earl is not with us. We actually asked him to be in this lineup, but he's moved out of state, and he wasn't going to move back. I understand that, a lot of water's gone under the bridge. In a way, the guy we have now is a better fit. Bob McNaughton's a good guy, and we wanted to move the sound forward, so he's the guy we need right now.

Just to go back to your original question, our manager, Jon Babbin, was going to gigs a lot, and he's got his own label, Criminal IQ. He was running into Steve, who was apparently going to gigs. At some point there was talk, "Well, what do you think about getting the Effigies back together?" I said that I would do it, but I had certain conditions to be met. They said they agreed with that and then we started getting this lineup together. Paul had been doing gigs with Bob, and he said Bob was the guy we wanted to talk to, since Earl wasn't going to do it.

MRR: It seems like a lot of the shows you've been playing are with bands in the current underground music scene. You're not taking the club rock circuit like a lot of other bands that are reuniting. Why?

John: Couple different reasons. One, the gigging scene's a lot different from where we left it. Nowadays it's a pay-to-play thing, which I'm not really into. And we're not a nostalgia act. That was one of my conditions: I said, "Look, I don't want to just get together and play old Effigies stuff." I'm willing to play part of it; I like that stuff. I've outgrown some of it a little bit, but the stuff I haven't outgrown I still think is good. I wanted to make new material. I'm capable of it, and I wanted to take the Effigies into 2006 and beyond. I don't think the people who used to see us want to come out and see us anymore. A lot of these people aren't really into music; a lot of them are dead. They're gone, and I don't want to play to them anyway. I wanted to play to a new crowd, and what was really surprising was that a lot of the kids were—I mean, the first gig we did, a lot of them were singing along with the old songs, which was an indication that we had some staying power.

MRR: I think in Chicago, especially, a lot of the kids who are my age just grew up on it.

John: And that kind of surprises me, because as I look back on my own life in music, we never sold that many records. We gigged, and we were part of the first generation of real Chicago punk bands that came out of that scene. But we never got much airplay. We never sold that many records. I figured we were there, we did it, some people liked us, and then we disappeared. But we had some staying power, which surprised me.

MRR: I recently listened to a radio interview with Stephen Blush, who did that *American Hardcore* book. He had said that there are bands still playing punk rock music but the movement itself, which he defined as having an undefined agenda, doesn't exist anymore. Do you agree with that?

John: I would go even further. I think rock is dead. The Pistols essentially killed it; I think that was the last death row of rock. Then what do you get? You get its aftermath. You pick up the pieces. I think what it would take to create a mass movement, I hate to say this, but some great big social cataclysm would probably join young bands in one purpose. I kind of hope that doesn't happen. I don't need that to give my band relevance. My band's relevance is its music. I don't need a movement to give my band some kind of definition. In fact, I don't even want a movement. I always hated belonging to groups, even within punk rock. We're not a hardcore band. All you have to do is listen to our music to know that we're not a hardcore band.

MRR: Saying that you hated groups and the movement, did you feel alienated from punk rock? Did you feel like you didn't want to be lumped in?

John: When we shopped our first records, we were trying to get on an indie label, and we got some letters back saying, "Well, you guys don't really fit in any category." At that point I realized, this is going to be a problem, nobody's really going to like us because they don't know where to pigeonhole us. But we are what we are, and I think that was the whole idea, just to be your own self. We're playing in a fairly conventional medium, so can you say that what we're doing is really original? But maybe originality isn't really the essence of it. It's kind of like blues, in that it's fairly predictable and it's musical progressions and all that, but there are still people who have strong personalities and ideas, and they're playing. So I feel the people who like us really like us because we're the Effigies and not because we're hardcore or punk rock. In fact, I think a lot of people who come thinking we're a hardcore band are disappointed.

MRR: We're doing the interview at a major music convention, where A&R reps go to sign new bands to be the next hot thing. Why are you here? Is there any desire to impress the industry or to get your name in the press?

John: That's a very existential question, but I will tell you this: the odds of us ever getting signed to a major label—

MRR: Well, not even getting signed, but—

John: We do have a new record, which I'm very happy with. Whether it's good or not, that's not up to me to decide. Part of the whole beauty of doing this, at 47 years old, is that I can actually—I don't give a fuck what people think about my music. I'm sure as hell not doing it for the money, because this is costing us money. I just do this because I want to do it. As far as I'm concerned, I'm just putting this shit out. If people want it, that's fine. If they don't, I'll crawl back under my rock. We are looking for a vehicle to release this record, and we've been talking with some record labels, but if we could develop some kind of connections to put this record out, that would be good. Otherwise I have absolutely no expectations about this. I just wanted to come down here. It's actually fun to be here, just to play.

MRR: Where, in the context of the Effigies, musically, does this fit in? Is it the same sort of stuff you were writing 25 years ago when you started, or is it picking up where *Ink* and some of the later records left off?

John: We're kind of jumping over *Ink* and *Fly On A Wire*. One of my conditions for getting into this band was we would pick up where the first album, *For Ever Grounded*, left off. We've got to try to get the energy of our live sound on record, which is the equivalent of what we were doing back then. I'm still into very loud, aggressive music. I'm not listening to a whole lot of rock these days, but when really good stuff comes along I will listen to it over and over and over again, just burn it out of my system. That's the kind of sound I want, what I would want to listen to. My tastes really haven't changed that much in that aspect. I'm less tolerant of bad stuff.

MRR: Since you're saying you want to skip over the last two records, how did those records develop when they developed?

John: Some of the people in the band were tired of playing the punk rock thing. And I don't mean tired in the sense of, "I can't do this anymore," but punk rock was becoming more of a tribal thing in a bad way. It was like, you don't fit here, you don't have your mohawk, and we were never into that bullshit anyway. We found that most people who were more extreme had very little to say, and we realized that it was a very constrictive thing. I didn't want to soften up the sound, but at the time there were influences in the band that were pulling the sound towards a certain direction. And essentially, the band ended in 1986 when we were pretty much at loggerheads about the sound. There were a series of disappointments. We had a bad tour, the records didn't go anywhere, nobody bought them. The records were becoming, not diluted, but they didn't have the energy that they should have had. So I didn't want to pick up where that left off. The aim was getting back to the original sound.

MRR: What was the context for what was going on in the Chicago underground music scene when you guys started? Was there a

punk scene before you guys came along?

John: The original bands that came out were Strike Under, Naked Raygun, The Way Outs, later on Da, bands like that. And the Effigies. There wasn't really anything going on. And we were kind of latecomers anyway. We were getting a lot of influence from England, but a lot of it was from LA too. We came out just after Black Flag was coming out. We were more like that generation of bands. Chicago, though, really didn't have anything. The punk scene in Chicago was dominated by these art school types. These people weren't into making bands. They were into, basically, dancing and being hip to the New York stuff. It's like they weren't into making music. We were more into making music.

MRR: Is that why maybe a lot of people in Chicago—the same types of people who were making punk rock in LA—were going to dance clubs in Chicago, the sort of art school people?

John: Exactly. I like the LA scene a lot. *Slash* magazine was, I think, the greatest punk magazine in the United States. We used to read *New York Rocker* religiously, *Slash*, there was a magazine out of Toronto. We used to travel up to Toronto just to see bands. The Dead Boys at this club called the Horseshoe is still the high watermark for gigs. That was the best punk gig I've ever seen in my life. And as far as sheer energy goes, every gig has to be measured on that scale. It was palpable, the energy in that gig. They had a fairly good scene up there with Teenage Head, the Diodes, the Mods, a bunch of really good bands out of Toronto. They actually used to come down to Chicago to play. These were the bands we went to go see. And it's like, "Whoa, these guys smoke, we want to be like what they're doing." We didn't have the benefit of local bands like that. We couldn't look at local bands and say, "Man, these dudes really rule." The scene was like Strike Under, Naked Raygun, us, basically the bands on the Oz record. And then after that there was Articles of Faith, Out of Order, Rights of the Accused.

MRR: That was all a couple years after that, right?

John: Yeah, it was. And those are the bands that you can call hardcore bands. I think they're comfortable with that. Well, maybe—I don't speak for them.

MRR: I think one of the things that sort of ties the sound together for the first wave of Chicago punk bands is that a lot of them were really UK-influenced.

John: We liked a lot of the UK bands. The Pistols, to me, are still *the* band. But then there were also other bands that we were really into, like the Stranglers and the Ruts. We liked the fact that all these scenes were very rich in diverse sounds. From the outside it was all punk rock, yet some of them were half-reggae, some of them were—that's what was interesting to me, there's all different kinds of shit going on. So we did listen to UK stuff, but we also listened to a lot of US stuff. The LA scene in many ways is great. We were looking a lot towards that, especially Black Flag, all the stuff on Dangerhouse. There's almost nothing bad on Dangerhouse. In 1980 or '81 I went out to LA for a week and a half. This buddy of mine, he was out there getting a band started. We went to the Starwood every night and all this shit was going on. It's like, man, this is fuckin' happening. Why can't we get something like this going in Chicago?

MRR: Yeah, I was gonna say, did seeing such a fertile scene just blow your mind?

John: You have to remember that Chicago's got that boneheaded blue collar attitude against punk rock, where a lot of these rock types were absolutely bigoted against anything that wasn't like Scorpions or Black Sabbath. They didn't get it. They were meatheads, a lot of these guys. We had to fight to establish a foothold in that town, and it was hard. Back then Babbin had a mohawk, and these people were either afraid of him or were going to kick his ass. Either way, he had balls for doing it. Nowadays, it's like, who gives a shit?

MRR: Were there a lot of record stores in Chicago that people who were in bands were going to to feed on, like Wax Trax?

John: Jim and Danny ran Wax Trax. It started in Denver and then they moved. The Chicago store was, I think, their second store. They brought *everything* in. They even had bootlegs. That was like the mecca. They were decent guys, they helped us out a lot. The other place was a chain called Sounds Good. The benefit of that place was you had a bunch of people who were really big fans, who also tried to stock indie stuff, and they brought in a lot of shit. So between those two stores, we used to make these pilgrimages all the time. We lived in Evanston, so we'd go into the city all the time to buy records. That's how we found out about stuff.

MRR: How early was it when bands started coming to Chicago from neighboring scenes, like from Michigan? When did you start getting access to other bands?

John: The problem was that underage shows didn't start until later, which meant we'd go to bars. The laws were changing about drinking. The ages were fluctuating. We were actually grandfathered in under the law for awhile. If you were 19 you could buy beer and wine and go to bars. We had access at first, but early on we were cut off. I still remember going to Gaspar's, which is now a place called Schuba's. We wanted to see the Dils, and we had to spend like 15 minutes talking the bouncer into letting us in, saying, "Look man, we're not gonna drink. All we want to do is see the music." And we were the only people in the place, practically. But I got to see the Dils.

A lot of bands avoided Chicago, and for good reason, because there

really weren't any gigs. There were a few clubs later on that started getting established but it wasn't until much later. The club, C.O.D.'s, was really good, this club called Huey's, which later turned into this club called Misfit's, they were very good, Gaspar's was very good. These were all very small clubs. But you had to know about them. Another thing people don't appreciate is the communication that went between bands.

MRR: How was that information disseminated?

John: Bands would come through and there was an instant rapport lots of times. Bands would put each other up. We lived in a basement apartment in Evanston, very close to Howard Street, right next to the city, where bands would just come in and stay. And what would happen, typically, with the bands, there'd be one guy, usually the manager, who was basically running the show. He was usually the guy who didn't drink, who had his head screwed on straight. And they would keep these books. Ken Lester from D.O.A. had this very, very big book of connections. Babbin, who ended up being our manager, started his own book. They started comparing notes, and this information would float between books. Remember, that was in the days before palm pilots, before beaming shit back and forth, before computers. People would just compile these little notebooks of contacts, and then you would make calls. Typically, you'd also find people who would be willing to put you up. It was three tours of the United States before I ever slept in a motel room. I slept on a lot of floors, where my skin was crawling the next day. But that's how word got around. People were very cooperative too. They were very bighearted people. They just did it purely out of their own volition.

MRR: How about even within Chicago? Were there a lot of people doing fanzines, things like that?

John: There were some, like *Coolest Retard*, but again it wasn't a very rich scene. There was always this kind of pall. People just didn't move on things. It was kind of a drag. For a scene of that size, it should have had a lot more.

MRR: A few years later when the *hardcore* hardcore bands started popping up, was there some actual animosity between the original guys and the new kids, the dogmatic little kids?

John: Well, when you say, "dogmatic little kids," that's absolutely true. There were a few people who seemed to want to pick fights all the time, especially a certain guy from a certain band. I don't know where he gets it. We didn't even have anything to do with that scene. It was sort of a separate scene that grew up. People started giving us shit, "Well, you don't play enough underage shows," which wasn't really true. It came down to a point where they had a sit-down at one of our shows, which is ridiculous.

MRR: A sit-down? They went into the audience and...

John: They told everybody to sit down, which is hilarious. A few of the cadres were orchestrating this whole thing: "Sit down during the Effigies!" The whole thing was very political in the sense that it was like they were organizing a strike or something. I actually gave him a microphone and said, "All right, man. Here's the mic. What's your beef?" And he couldn't really come up with anything. He said, "You guys don't play any underage shows." Okay, that's a fair comment, we'll try to play more. But it wasn't a real beef with what we were. And I think that some people did have a beef with what we were, but they never came outright and said it. They just kept nipping the edges.

MRR: Do you think in some ways they were just sort of attacking you to suit their own needs, to get their own names out there?

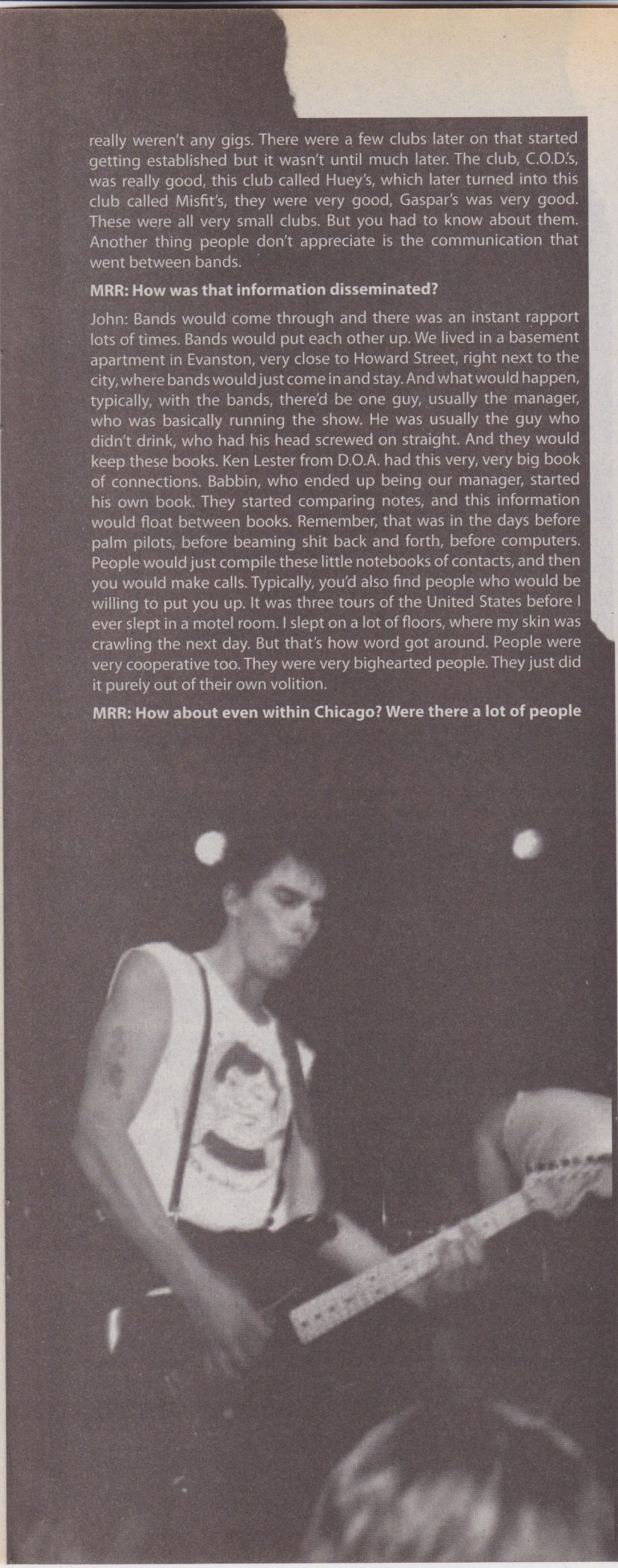
John: Yes, thank you for saying that. I'm not gonna say it, I don't have a beef with anybody. A few years ago somebody was doing this movie about punk rock and asked, "Can we interview you?" And somebody said, "Hey, you know this guy's been bad-mouthing you in his record, in his liner notes." I haven't talked about the guy in ten years, I don't know what this business is. Just absolute vitriol, and I don't know where it comes from. But, I mean, I have no beef with anybody. If you don't like me, that's fine, don't come to shows. I don't care.

MRR: When that scene came about and started playing shows, did that in a way drive you to not want to play those shows? It seems like that was about the time when you started changing the style.

John: A lot of these shows were for young kids. People were slam dancing. It was really clear from the stage. You could see a lot of kids didn't really care about the music, they were just in there. It was like, this is a dogpile. It's a social ritual. We'll do it under the context of a rock gig, but they'd be doing it on a football field if it wasn't a rock gig. But they were just kids, they didn't know any better. I don't mind playing to kids, but what the fuck does this slam dancing have to do with us? I like people dancing and everything, but it'd be more satisfying to know that they liked the music and they were doing it because of that, not because it was something that was expected, some kind of ritual that got developed at these shows. If people were going to get all worked up about the music, I'm totally into that. But it became obvious that it really wasn't about the music anymore. It was more about being punk.

MRR: Just going back to the Effigies style, how did you end up incorporating disco beats and making danceable punk songs?

John: That is more of the English influence to an extent. The influences were a lot more far-reaching. They pulled in all different kinds of influences, and they'd make it work. For awhile, we were into early Killing Joke, that kind of stuff. It had a lot of energy to it. I even liked some of the early industrial stuff. The way music hypes degenerate is they tend to get more and more strict about their construction. They tend to get more exclusive, and they bring in fewer influences. They



Live at CBGB's, 1983 c/o Obik

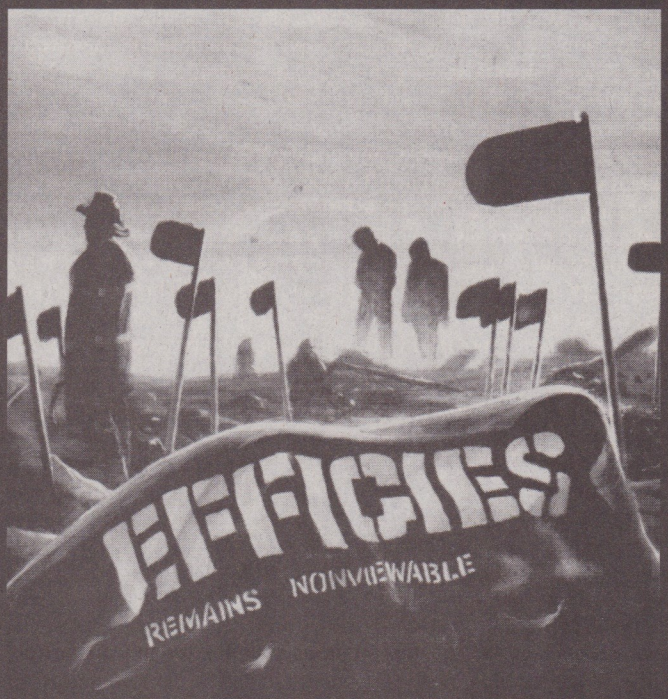
become more specialized into a type. I wasn't into that. I was into whatever we liked, and we liked stuff with energy and rhythm, and that's what we were into doing.

MRR: Towards the end of the first run of the Effigies, you were on Enigma, which is a bigger label in the States. How did that affect the band? Were you able to reach more fans, or did you turn off your old fans because of the label difference?

John: It's kind of ironic for people to accuse us of selling out, because we probably made less money than anybody. I'm just surprised, to this day, about how much people collect royalty checks from these little labels. We never had anything like that. We cut our first records for, literally, a few hundred dollars. And what little money we made went right back into the band. We ended up getting screwed by Enigma when Green Room went belly up. I'm still pissed to this day because they won't even send us copies of our own record. We got cases of our records that were cut-outs, basically. I don't have pure copies of my own records, other than the ones I went out and bought myself. There's very little difference between the way a lot of the big indies did their business and the big labels. A lot of the ones that were really pure and honest, they just went bankrupt. It's almost as if the record business doesn't tolerate honesty, like a lot of other segments of this society. It's too bad, because really, we ended up getting fucked big on a lot of the stuff. But the Enigma thing got us a certain credibility. It put us in a certain league. We were on the same label that the Smithereens were on for awhile. And Smithereens are okay, but they went on to bigger things and we didn't. But we never made any money. When Green Room went belly up, that was the end of it. That was my first taste of how you get fucked in the music business. We started getting bankruptcy filings from their law firm, and even I, as naïve as I was at that point, could understand that the last thing we got basically said, "Lawyers get X number of fees from bankruptcy, and bands get shit."

MRR: A lot of your lyrics are specific to Chicago. How have Chicago politics changed since the early '80s, and have your views in regards to them changed since then?

John: I've become even more hardened by it. The US Attorney they have now in Chicago is this absolutely great guy. He's like a modern hero, this guy named Patrick Fitzgerald. He's basically like this medievalist in a way, in his attitudes and his purity. And he's doing exactly what he should be, which is indicting the former governor. Actually, as we speak, the jury is in delivery. And that guy is totally corrupt. He's known for commuting all the death sentences in Illinois. He did it purely for political reasons, and he is a guy who was absolutely perfect in his corruption, in the sense that that guy didn't do anything unless it benefited him. And nothing's changed. Chicago politics are just as dirty.



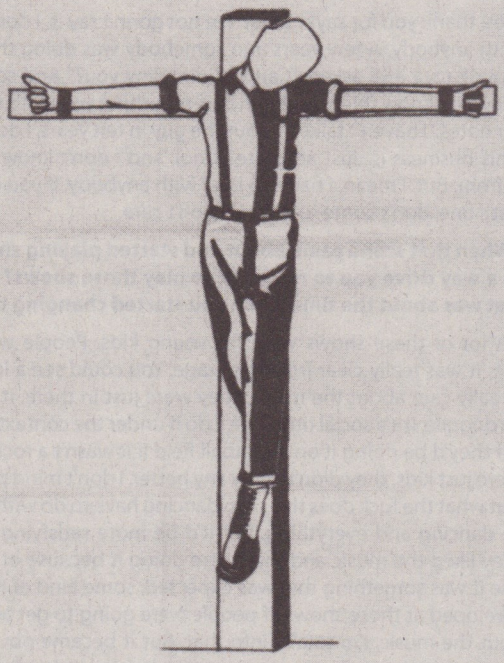
MRR: Are you writing lyrics to these new songs that are still on the same subject?

John: Oh, yeah. Absolutely. It's a very rich topic, actually. Our record, in a lot of ways, is just where we left off.

MRR: Are there certain lyrical themes from older songs that don't hold up, or that you don't feel the same way about?

John: I still like playing "Body Bag." If you listen to the lyrics there's a little more to it, it's not like a Discharge song. It's not about death and destruction and all that. It's about quick death in the modern mechanical world. It's a thing that still bothers me too, because it's about technology and man, how the two sometimes don't get along. So that topic holds up. Most of our other stuff holds up, but I don't like playing some songs as much as others. We had sessions in the band where we decided what songs we would play. I told them we had to play some of the old material, because I really like the old material, and I think it's held up. There were some songs I wanted to play that other people didn't. But it was okay, we still run a sort of democracy within the band.

MRR: Were there any songs you wanted to still play because you thought they were musically relevant, but lyrically, they didn't mean the same thing to you anymore?



EFFIGIES
RIGHTS OF THE ACCUSED
THE ALLIED

CUBBY BEAR LOUNGE SAT NOV 13

UNDER 21 8:00 OVER 21 10:00 pm 1059 W. ADDISON

John: We were never really that topical. We were never that narrow in the sense that—people who wrote songs about Ronald Reagan and Maggie Thatcher can't really play that stuff anymore. Even then I realized those songs weren't really interesting. Even if you don't like what's going on, at least explain it in terms that are a little bit deeper. A lot of people became slogans that people felt they had to repeat in order to fit in.

MRR: How did Chicago politics and the corruption we were talking about play, not just into your lyrics, but into your life? You became a D.A. Is that all directly related?

John: I left music. The band breakup was bad. And that's a very long story too, but it's all water under the bridge. At that point though, I went back to college, got my degree and went to law school. But I realized I'd have a problem. I am fundamentally still not a lawyer. I try cases. I'm a trial lawyer. I'm in court all the time, but I'm a government guy. I still feel like if I make money off of my profession, it's bad to me. So there's never any moral problem about what I do. I can get up every day and realize that I'm working to make this world better. It's a good feeling.

MRR: Are there ever any instances where you have to prosecute someone when you don't really agree with what they've done wrong?

John: Not really. The cases that I've done have been clear-cut. The last case I tried was the rape and murder of a 12-year-old girl. There's no question to me about what has to be done. In fact, I think the guy got off easy with a natural life sentence. Occasionally, questions may come up, and I don't think I ever do the wrong thing. The law allows you to make judgment calls within it. You have a certain amount of discretion. But I've never felt uncomfortable with that.

MRR: Do you ever feel that sometimes a lot of the criminals are victims of bigger circumstances, and that it's not really getting to the point of things to go after them?

John: That's a good question. I don't believe, in this country, that there's, for want of a better term, a Marxist excuse for crime. You can't say, "This guy stole a loaf of bread to eat, or to feed his family." I haven't seen it. And I've been doing this job for 15 years. There are people I have known who've had cases where people get arrested for, say, stealing steaks. Those cases get pinched. Nobody gets prosecuted for that. But there are other cases where people may disagree with the laws. That's fine, but that's not the prosecutor's job. The prosecutor's job is to enforce the law, and I'll tell you what: if I were confronted every day with laws I didn't want to enforce, I wouldn't do my job. I can't feel like I'm doing something that I'm not morally comfortable with. If you don't like the laws, then change the laws. To beef about things like, "Well, the jails are full in the United States, one out of every 200 people in the United States is in prison." That's a meaningless argument. Think of the premises. How is it that they're in prison? They've either committed a crime for which they're guilty, or the police are just rounding up innocent people and throwing them in prison, which is illegal. If they haven't committed crimes, take them out right now.

Which actually leads to an interesting argument about the death penalty. When they started executing people again in Illinois, the first guy to get executed was this guy named John Wayne Gacy. There's no question about that guy's guilt. They found like 50 bodies under his house. But it becomes a little more difficult with the guys who followed. Were they guilty, or were they not? And people are claiming now that there's flimsy evidence and whatnot. I did hear some debates about it, and some people in Chicago were very loud about their opposition to the death penalty. But they would say, "Don't kill the guy, let him do life in prison instead." They're not saying we should release the guy. So even they believe he's guilty of what he's accused of doing. I hate to say this, but murder is a fairly routine crime in this country, which is sad, and actually tells you how low we're getting. The people who go to death row are above and beyond bad. If you ever have any doubt about the guilt of these people, don't read what the papers say. Go to the actual poll reports and read the cases. If you're against the death penalty, that's fine, but you owe it to yourself to read what courts of law—it's a fairly high standard of approval, beyond a reasonable doubt—have found these people guilty of doing. The only thing that bothers me about lots of death penalty discussions in this country is that whenever people talk about it, they never talk about the victims. They never consider the possibility, almost, that other human beings are capable of inflicting this kind of damage on others, and that's why people will never take those positions seriously lots of times. People are very dogmatic now, one way or the other.

Another problem is that these people are warm bodies, their hearts are beating. It's very hard to take that life away. George Orwell has a very good essay about it. He witnesses an execution in India, over a guy who steals something. He talks about his feelings when he witnesses

Live at CBGB's, 1983
c/o Obik

this execution, about how this is a healthy human body being put to death. It's this idea that, should punishment ever rise to this level? And for theft, I think everybody would agree, no. But that's not what this is. If they're not dead, these people can always, in theory, be released at some point and go out and do it again. A lot of these guys, they're hardwired to do it. Think about what it is to be a human being and to commit an act like that. Somebody who's done something like that is going to do it again. Why? Because they've already crossed that bridge. They've already crossed that point where all the human restraints against committing that kind of crime have been surmounted. There's no barrier anymore. That's why I think people who get used to killing can either become bloodthirsty or indifferent to it. What is a society that is relatively free and open supposed to do with people like that? Putting them away in prison forever is fine for a lot of people, and you can just let them linger, but you have to have some guarantee that they'll never be out ever again.

MRR: What about things that aren't murder? What about lower level drug crimes and things like that, where people are getting prosecuted and put into prison?

John: There's a great myth in this country that the jails are full of people who possessed, like, a joint. I defy anybody to point to one person in this country who is in prison for possessing a joint. It just doesn't exist. If they are in there, I'll tell you what it's for. They're on probation or parole for a much more serious crime, and they violated that. So in other words, you've got an attempted murderer or bank robber with five year's probation. He's walking a very thin line.

Part of the reason I like my job is because there's always something new coming along. Sometimes I think I've heard everything, then somebody gives me a call and I go, "What the fuck? I can't believe this guy is telling me this." It's an interesting job, and when I start having moral problems about what I do, I'll quit doing it. The same way I quit being in a band, when it was just not right.

MRR: And that's never happened?

John: No. Well, it happened with the band, when we split up. In '86 I effectively got kicked out of my own band. They weren't happy with the direction of the band. I wanted to keep it more towards what we had been doing earlier. We did get together with different lineups later on, briefly. We did an East Coast tour with Earl, Steve Bjorklund on bass, and Joe Haggerty, who plays drums for 'Raygun. And that was actually a really good lineup. Later on we had Tom Woods, who was also in Bloodsport originally. These were all good guys, but every time the Effigies played, it was the lineup we needed. I wouldn't have cut corners, or bent the rules to bring in people who really didn't belong. The people who played were Effigies.

MRR: Since you've been playing the more recent batch of shows, how have you been getting paid? I'm just curious—

John: We barely get paid.

MRR: Well, that's what I was thinking.

John: You know how much we're getting for this show? $175. Know how much I spent in gas? I think I spent $200 just for one car to get down here.

MRR: The reason I just thought of it was because when I was going over notes preparing for this, I reread the first *MRR* interview, which was basically two pages of you guys arguing about getting paid for shows. And it occurred to me that there's no way you're getting paid for shows now.

John: You can't make money anyway. People won't pay you for your music. Cnet has "Body Bag" on it for free download. Who the fuck gave them permission? I'm not against home taping and all that shit. But on the other hand, at some point bands have to make some money to pay for fuckin' gas, cause we're not doing it. Back in the old days you did better at the clubs because they let you at least keep the door. The problem now is that they take a bigger cut off the door, and they never come up with guarantees now either. So basically, we're going out of town and the guy will say, "Well, the best I can do is a $200 guarantee. But if you take the guarantee, that's all you're gonna get." Well, okay, let's crunch some numbers here. We're driving six hours, so we're going to have to get two motel rooms. Two cars have to go up there because we don't have a van. Already we're in the red for $300. At what point do we pay up? Occasionally in the city we get big shows that'll pay for all the shit that we've done already, but it's a money loser. Back then it was even worse. I'm sure that the *Maximum Rocknroll* interview may have been while we were on tour where we literally needed money to get to the next town. There were times when I was on the road and we were making $2 a day. I'd go into a store and buy, like, cans of boiled potatoes. And that was my meal, that was for the whole fuckin' day. You need money to make it go. It's funny how we get accused of being these, I don't know, capitalist tools or whatever. But we were living more like a commune than anyone I know, at least in the early days. It was all volition. It was all on our own. We got by on very little. And we're used to hardship, I like hardship.

MRR: It fuels you.

John: It does. Maybe the hungry artist can say what he has to say a little bit better. History has a great way of fucking people who don't produce widgets. I've never produced widgets, and I never will. I accept that, but sometimes it's tough. And I've got no complaints.

RAT CITY RIOT

interview by bruce roehrs

MRR: We are here with Rat City Riot, at Patrick's House. Everybody introduce himself.

Noah: Noah, and I sing for Rat City Riot.

Chris: Chris, I play guitar.

Josh: Josh, I play drums.

Brock: Brock, I'm the roadie.

Patrick: I'm Patrick and this is my house.

MRR: Talk about some of the places you've been and some of the shows that stick in your memory.

Josh: Montreal was the best show, the best brawl and lots of underage girls drinking at the bar.

MRR: You've covered almost all the requirements with one show.

Noah: We went to Canada twice. We went the first time and played. Then drove eight hours to Toronto. During the whole first week of the Canadian tour we had Red Alert in our van. So we had eleven people in an eight-passenger van. We had six stinky drunk Brits in there; it was a pretty good time.

MRR: Do they bathe less than Americans? Did it seem that way to you?

Josh: On tour, yes!

Noah: I don't know about at home, but definitely those guys were more concerned with bars than with showers during our trip.

Chris: The bass player said he showered, I think, twice during their two weeks in America.

Noah: Those guys were really cool to play shows with though.

MRR: What were some of the good bands that opened for you in Canada?

Chris: Gutter Demons were fucking awesome.

Noah: Yes, a psychobilly band called The Gutter Demons

Chris: The Ventilators. They weren't that good, but were cool people.

Noah: Yeah, it was really cool, these punk rock kids basically ran an entire city block of industrial-type buildings and there were three floors. The one we were at, we played on the third floor. There was a sort of venue on each floor of the building. It was awesome.

Josh: It was a legitimate venue. One kid had a plywood square over one wall. He opened it up, and it was a fuckin' full bar, and it had shitloads of beer. They were fuckin' selling anything and everything right there at the bar.

MRR: Do you get paid for these small shows?

Noah: A lot of times with us, especially on the first tour, we just kind of went to a city just for having a show to play. I don't even mention money nine times out of ten when I'm doing the booking.

MRR: You don't ask for a guarantee?

Noah: Well, if somebody actually asks me, I say we've got X-amount as a guarantee, which barely covers our expenses- like gas and ten bucks per person for food, probably. I haven't really been mentioning it. People walk up at the end of the show and go "Uh, dude—sorry," and it's like $40. And it's like, "Oh, cool, whatever." And then we'll go to another show, and, "Uh, dude—sorry" and it's like $200. And I say, "No, it's fine, believe me." [laughter]

MRR: I guess you have to do that, at this point in your career.

Josh: Exactly. It's all grassroots. Planting seeds and shit. We knew we had to do that. We knew the first two tours, at least, were going to be like that. Playing strip-mall bars, and shit… But some of our best shows were the smaller ones. If ten people are fucking rocking out, that's so much better than fifty people trying to talk over you and just trying to get to the bar. I know we got some loyal-ass people. In places where there were very few people at the first show, next time they bring two or three more.

MRR: It builds up slowly.

Patrick: Last August, when I went out with Nuts & Bolts, every place on tour where we stopped, people were playing the Rat City Riot CD while bands were setting up—you guys fuckin' blew up the States!

MRR: You've been doing a lot of this hard work without the promotional skills that a major label could give you.

Noah: When I'm doing the booking for our tours, I pretty much give Taang! a list of addresses of the promoters and venues. I tell them how many posters to send to what area, they'll send out CDs too. Pretty much that's it—posters and CDs are all we have to offer, really. We don't even have a band photo anymore.

MRR: You have T-shirts—you print those up when you go out on the road.

Noah: Yeah, we have a real good friend at a skateboarding company in San Diego, called Tum Yeto and they hook us up pretty good with our shirts.

MRR: They do nice work. You seem to keep the price down too.

Noah: I've always hated it when T-shirts are more than $10. When a band is charging $20 for a one-color, one-sided T-shirt, it's shitty.... Our new tour shirts are five colors, front and back and they're $10. Honestly, I never want to charge more than $10 for a T-shirt.

MRR: Rat City Riot mixes rock and roll background with the skinhead mystique both in the music and the style of dress.

Patrick: It brings a good element to the band. I can't stand watching bands where every single member is fuckin' straight-up boots and braces all of the time.

MRR: How did you hook up with Taang! Records?

Noah: We were supposed to be on a compilation that was gonna happen with a bunch of San Diego bands, called *I Left My Drugs in San Diego*. Which may or may not ever come out.

Josh: Hopefully not.

MRR: Older songs that we don't hear on the record?

Noah: No, actually… You may be able to tell, and you might not, but there are four songs on the CD that were recorded almost a year earlier. Then we recorded the rest of the album. We decided we didn't want to wait for this compilation CD to come out, that's why we went in to record. They wanted a cover song for the comp so we did the Slapshot cover. It just took so goddamn long for the thing to even look like it was actually gonna come out that we went into the studio again and recorded another five or six songs, put them together, and re-mastered everything.

MRR: You were paying for all of this yourself?

Noah: Yes, we handed Taang! a completed CD and gave him a couple of days, and asked what he thought of it. He said it was "amazing, can't believe it, let's do something."

Josh: He has a pretty hard ear. He is a critical bitch about every single thing.

Patrick: Do you guys have anything else coming up soon, album-wise?

Josh: It's looking like we won't be able to get into the studio until the beginning of next year.

Chris: We need some time at home to polish the songs and to record the next album.

Josh: …We probably have a third, maybe half, of the next album written.

Patrick: What's the feeling on the new songs?

Noah: I really like our new stuff; I think it's better than our old stuff, which obviously should be how it works. We were trying to sit on some of our newer stuff and not burn it out before we thought about recording. But it's not really an option. If you are going on tour you want to play some new shit. We've already toured on the same record twice now. Which is good, because I didn't want to do a three-month-long tour when nobody knew who we were or any of our songs.

Josh: And we finally got a record released, fuckin' sell that bitch and get it out there.

Patrick: You've got something to say. You can still captivate a crowd going to the same place and playing the same shit…

MRR: It's nice when the kids come up to the stage and start singing along…

Noah: Last tour we had people singing along and it was really cool.

Josh: Random too—people we didn't know. It was kinda cool. The Dropkick Murphys show was cool; it was a nice opportunity for us.

MRR: Was that in Boston?

Josh: Yeah, it was at the Avalon.

Noah: We got a good response from that show. It was fun. That show was probably one of the first ones where we played on the road and people started singing along. It's a nice surprise to look down and see someone yelling back at you.

MRR: That's gotta make you feel good, seeing that from the stage.

Noah: Yeah, especially for me at that particular show. I had the stomach flu and was as sick as a dog. I was just hurting up there, and people moving around and showing some energy helped me out a lot.

Josh: They treated us super good too. They took care of us completely. It was an awesome experience.

MRR: That Ken Casey, he is a stand-up guy.

Josh: I got to meet all those guys, they were all super nice.

MRR: Who writes most of these songs?

Noah: I write most of the lyrics. Chris wrote lyrics for one of the new songs. Josh comes up with some guitar shit. Some of our best work is from dicking around at practice.

Josh: One riff will come up, and we'll just try to fucking' build on that all day long.

Noah: Yeah, we've written songs in ten minutes before. I'll have lyrics come out of nowhere and they'll work perfectly with the music.

Josh: We've got a great new song called "Friday Night." That song is tough.

MRR: Are we going to hear that tonight?

Noah: Yes. It took me four months to figure out how to sing that song, but it's one of my favorite songs now.

MRR: One of the songs on the CD that impressed me was the one about US troops who are overseas.

Noah: "Reality TV."

Josh: Yeah, it shouldn't be common practice to pull fuckin' armor off of destroyed vehicles to weld onto Hum-V's and shit. That's ridiculous.

Noah: Well, the thing I say before that song "Reality TV," when I introduce it, it goes out to anybody who has family or friends that are serving overseas right now, and at one show I said, "I don't really care what your political standpoint is, whether you think we should be there or not, but those are all our guys and they all deserve to come home

safe." Nothing we can say is going to make those guys come home any sooner because it's not our decision.

MRR: That touches on another subject—do you guys vote?

Noah: Yeah.

Josh: Yeah, absolutely.

MRR: We are wasting a lot of money in Iraq.

Noah: We definitely have our problems here at home that should be first in line.

MRR: What about our hungry and our homeless right here?

Josh: Fuck, yeah. That's the shit I always bitch about. The shit fuckin' pisses me off. All the money we give out to other countries and shit, I mean, it's nice that we can do that, but there's so many fucking starving kids here and shit. Fuck that!

Patrick: Well, you know all the money that we shell out to send our boys over there…

MRR: Millions, billions.

Patrick: Are we just going to take over every country one at a time?

MRR: We may be overextending ourselves.

Noah: I guarantee our guys over there are not getting the proper equipment to keep them alive.

Josh: George Bush will go down as the worst president in history, I guarantee it. Ten years, fifteen years from now, people will be saying that shit. As a footnote, he is not from Texas! He was not born in Texas. He was born in Kennebunkport, Maine. Fuck that shit; he's no goddamn Texan. Seriously, I hate that shit. Walking around with a fucking cowboy hat on and shit!

MRR: He's just a rich boy who hasn't had to work a day in his life.

Noah: But he did really well with the other businesses that they gave him to run, right? [laughter]

Josh: Yeah, we invaded Iraq and all we got was this expensive gas. Thanks. That was a real good idea. You know, we are getting fucked bad right now. Bush talks about how the Taliban are religious zealots and shit—he's got the whole neo-theocracy planned out. His faith-based initiatives and shit he tries to push on everybody. He's the fucking terrorist! I fucking hate him!

MRR: You guys are fairly close to the border. Immigration is a huge issue nationally. Do you have strong feelings about that?

Josh: That's a tough one, you know. It's a really tough one.

MRR: Do any of you work labor jobs that would be impacted by illegal immigration?

Brock: I'm a carpenter—a wood framer.

Josh: I've been a line cook for 15 years. It would be great if we could have our own jobs without having to compete with the illegal labor. But at the same time, Americans are, for the most part, too fucking lazy or too picky to do all the fucking work that it takes to make a restaurant run. There's a lot of shit and a lot of shitwork that has to get done, and nobody will do it. It just sucks when you see that happening and at the same time the guys coming over to work getting fucked over, getting paid under the table, getting shitty ass pay.

Patrick: The way I see it is that America has always turned a blind eye to it. Now it's on the map, and why now? It's always been there.

MRR: It's hundreds of miles of border that we are talking about.

Patrick: It's a 700-mile fence.

Josh: Fuck, that's ridiculous.

Patrick: I think it's just an issue that the Bush administration is using to divide us.

Josh: I wonder if they are trying to divert attention.

Patrick: We've always turned a blind-eye, and you know what, we need these people who work.

Brock: My whole framing crew is Mexican.

MRR: And they work their asses off.

Brock: And I'm half-Mexican myself. They put in so many hours a day!

Josh: The best line cooks I've ever worked with in my life were Mexican.

MRR: Would it be possible to make them citizens? Or give them green cards—and tax them?

Brock: Possibly. The company that I work for, one of the carpentry foremen did that for one guy. Actually helped him get his papers and everything. He's fucking running jobs now!

MRR: It might even help—less chance of being laid-off first and some decent health care.

Josh: And start paying taxes. That's crucial.

Brock: Honestly, I don't think any guy I work with would be mad to have to pay taxes.

Josh: At least some of the money would stay here. Because 90% of their income goes straight back to Mexico.

MRR: How about unions? Are unions active in your area?

Patrick: I have to say my boss takes very good care of me. He's not union. I love him to death. I love my company. And the way I see it, unions served their purpose from the '30s to the '50s.

Noah: I'm personally pro-union. My dad has been active with Local 30, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union for a long time.

MRR: So you've grown up around that.

Noah: Yeah.

MRR: You understand how hard it is to organize. Wal-Mart will spend millions of dollars to keep unions out.

Noah: San Diego has a bad reputation for unions. When we first started doing the band thing and made stickers and giving them out to everybody. We gave some to some friends who worked on a construction site, and some of the older guys were like, "Rat City Riot, what's that?" I guess we didn't know it at the time but it kind of worked coincidentally well for us—San Diego, they call it Rat City because of the lack of unions. Our old drummer came up with the name, and we just stuck with the name. It was just a coincidence.

MRR: If there is a huge fight at one of your shows, do you stop the show and try to calm the fight?

Noah: I always try to settle things down.

MRR: If you had an amazing offer from a major label, but they didn't like the lyrics…would you change them just to get the sales?

Noah: I wouldn't let anybody change my lyrics, that's for sure.

MRR: Did your dad put pressure on you to go into the Union as you were coming up, Noah?

Noah: I would have probably been working in a union job if it hadn't been for the band.

MRR: Cause you need to be in one place to finish your apprenticeship and all that.

Noah: You just can't leave.

Patrick: Back to the union?

MRR: What about you Josh? Does your family approve of this punk rock lifestyle?

Josh: Well, my dad was a musician his whole life. My mom and dad got divorced when I was two. So my mom wasn't really too cool about me playing music when I first started.

Patrick: When was that?

Josh: When I was ten, and wanted to play music and what not. My dad gave me a couple of guitars, but I really wanted to play drums.

MRR: He did encourage you then?

Josh: Well, my dad did and my mom was like, "You don't want to live that life. You don't want to do that." And she tried to talk me out of it until I was about sixteen or seventeen. I had already been in about two or three bands, and she knew I was just going to do it.

MRR: And is she supportive now?

Josh: Yeah, totally. Absolutely. In fact, it was because of her record collection that I got started on rock 'n' roll in the first place. She had awesome records like Rolling Stones and all that shit.

MRR: How about you Chris? Are your parents supportive of this rock 'n' roll lifestyle?

Chris: Kinda. My mom worries about me a lot.

MRR: Like when you're on the road and she doesn't hear from you for two weeks.

Chris: I moved out of my house just before this tour and have been couch surfing. She worries about that shit. But she's, you know, she's sweet. Tries to support me in any way that she can.

MRR: Has she been out to see the band yet?

Chris: I think she's seen us once before in San Diego. She's actually coming to the show tonight.

MRR: Oh yeah? That's great! How about you, Noah—has your dad seen the band?

Noah: Yeah, my dad comes to shows whenever he can. My dad's cool, he hangs out all of the time. I can't say the same for my mom. She's not really into it.

MRR: She has not been to a show.

Noah: She's heard the CD. She has mixed feelings.

MRR: Because of the lyrics?

Noah: No, because it sounds angry, and I'm not an angry person, per se, I guess. But, you know, her whole thing is, "You should get a good job and do this." Well, I'll do what I want to do. She worries about me, like any mother would.

MRR: Yes, they all worry about that kind of thing.

Noah: And when I told her I was moving all my shit into a two-car garage and sleeping on the floor for three months, she had some interesting things to say about that.

MRR: What are some of the bands that supported you in Boston? Did some of them stand out for you?

Noah: Tommy and the Terrors.

Josh: Fuck yeah!

MRR: What a great band! They supported you down south too.

Noah: Yeah, they did. They played some good shows.

Josh: They definitely sound like Boston—you gotta love that.

MRR: They seem like really nice guys.

Josh: Fuck yeah—they're awesome.

Noah: Another band out there, that we played with the very first time we went out there, and haven't been able to link up with since, but would like to, is Darkbuster.

Josh: Fuck yeah, Darkbuster!

Noah. On our first tour, we ran out of money on the way to the second show. We pull up, and it's this place in Tulsa, Oklahoma, called "Unit D." From the outside it's basically a storage unit. So we roll up and the band members are talking shit to me, saying, "Oh, great, we are out of money and you booked us in a fucking storage unit."

Josh: It looked bad.

Noah: Yeah, it was looking real bad. We are sleeping in the van and just hanging out, waiting. And they open the doors to this place, and it was a fucking cathedral!

Josh: They had a legit bar!

Noah: It was bigger than most clubs. It was awesome.

Josh: You could bring your own beer.

Noah: It was a really fun show, and we did good on merch sales.

Josh: Yeah, a girl asked me to sign her titties!

MRR: When did Rat City Riot get started?

Noah: We've only been together for three and a half years now. I was fortunate enough to have a fairly legitimate job throughout this whole time, and was able to buy us a van and a trailer.

Josh: That plus Chris' GC connections, that's how come we're here.

MRR: That's for the music equipment?

Noah: Yeah, he works at Guitar Center, so…

Noah: Me working at venues and bars for the last however many years I've been doing it, helped out a lot…

MRR: Working the door?

Noah: I was the bouncer. That also afforded us the opportunity to play with a lot of good bands. The first show that we ever played in San Diego was with Slaughter and the Dogs. That's a highlight show.

MRR: Is it foreseeable that you can make a living from your music and give up the day job?

Josh: That's the dream. I really want to have time to work on my playing, my musicianship and to write songs. I don't have time to go into the studio, with the way things have been. We all have full-time jobs, trying to pay for all this shit. Then we go right out on tour, with no money. Yeah-that's the dream – to make a living playing rock and roll!

MRR: Thanks for the interview.

An added note: After this interview was conducted Rat City Riot toured the United States for another three months and would like to apologize to everyone who was unable to get CD's or vinyl of the bands release, Dirty Rotten Games at the shows. For some reason Taang! Records decided that the band didn't need to have that stuff along with them on tour since the record was supposedly in stores, malls, and various other nebulous locations. The band struggled through the tail end of the tour hoping to make it home without running out of gas or having to cancel shows. Apologies to Punk Rock Night @ Uncle Festers in Bloomington, Indiana, for a cancellation due to lack of gas money to get to the show.

Rat City Riot plans on touring again in March of 2007 and plans on doing a few split 7" records in the near future. So keep checking www.ratcityriot.com for news and touring updates.

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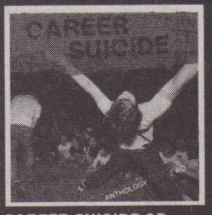

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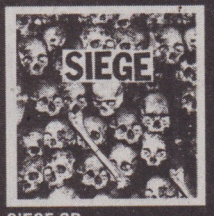

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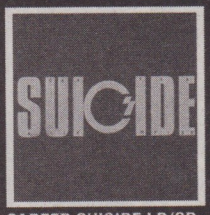

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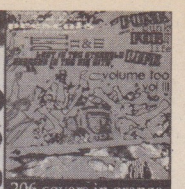

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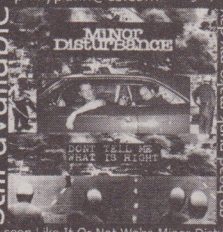

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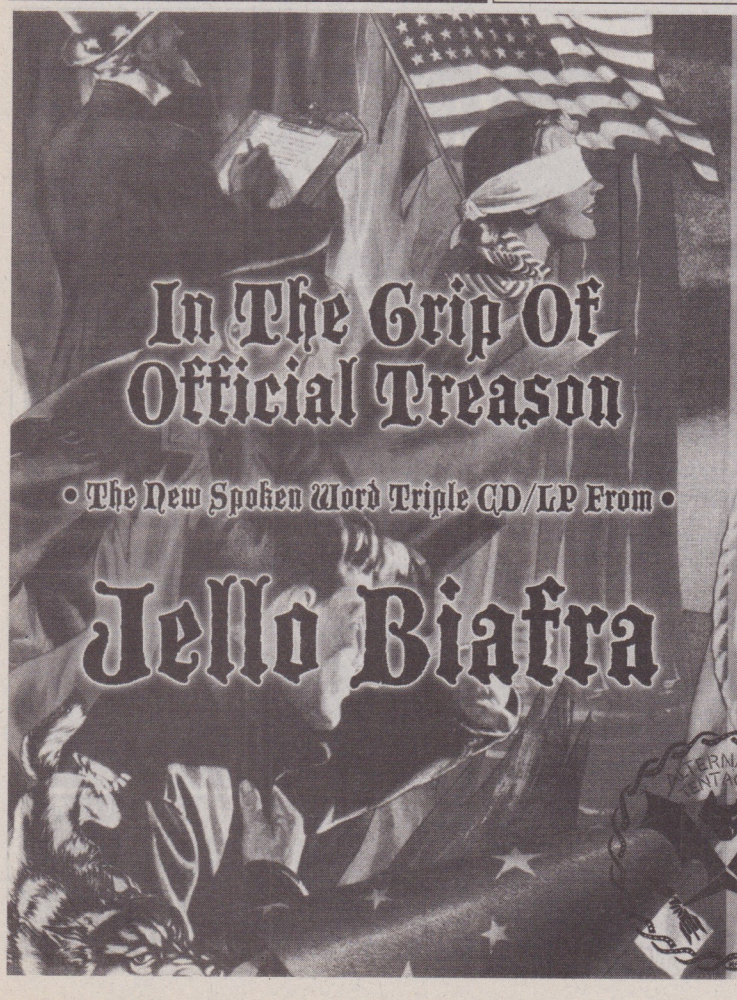
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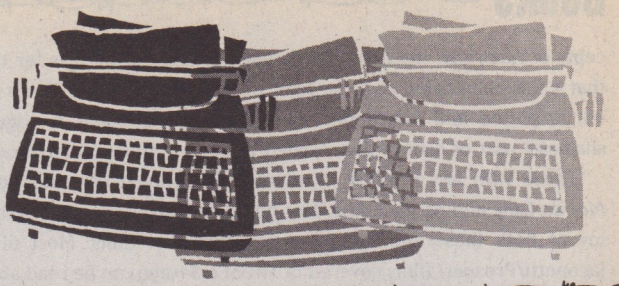

Ek Chuah
J.R. Cain
208 pages • $10
Active Bladder
PO Box 24607
Philadelphia, PA 19111

Here's the latest from fast moving Philly indie publisher Active Bladder; this time the author hails from Australia. *Ek Chuah* is a supernatural horror novel that has more gore and a much more forbidding flavor than Active Bladder's two previous books (both exemplary action stories from publisher Johnny Ostentatious, who also edited this book). If Ostentatious continues to cull the cream of the crop for Active Bladder, he's got a bright future in the book business!

Switching subjects, a bright future is what is not in the cards for most of the characters in this fast-moving fright-fest. Sickening gore, explicit sex, brutal death, and extremely puzzling events occur on almost every page of this book. However, except for a few dead spots (pun intended) the action moves quickly and the plot barrels forward with a clarity that's rare in DIY fiction. The description of the novel on the back cover, of all things, gives away the driving force behind the death and gore. This is odd because the actual novel doesn't explicitly name it until at least halfway through the book. When the novel does name the driving force, it doesn't fully explain it to us readers. By default, the cover description becomes an integral piece of the plot. This isn't a good idea for format and accessibility reasons. Future editions should fix this by altering the description and beefing up the explanation within the body of the novel.

The overall plot also has a few too many soft spots for curious readers like myself. I believe this is only excusable in a book that's part of a series, since later books will presumably fill in plot holes. *Ek Chuah* doesn't strike me as an easy book to make into a series, so hopefully Cain's next book will not be so soft on the motivations of the driving force behind the plot.

This weakness is minor compared to the strong writing of this book. Cain's characters are almost all fully formed and the action is tersely written with imagination and flair. Unlike many action-heavy books, the complex choreography of violent death appears simple and easy to follow for the reader. Cain's riveting and straightforward writing extends beyond the action sequences. Sex and death are intertwined throughout, with devastating, pulse-pounding results.

Cain's greatest skill seems to be in creating an overall mood of impending tragedy, death, and darkness. His writing reminds me of Charles Romalotti's series of macabre underground horror books collected in 'Pariah'- over the top action mixed with a truly disturbing atmosphere permeates both works. Are these two writers the tip of the next revolution in horror fiction?

Overall, this book is short, sharp, and yes, shocking. Incredibly well written, the minor plot issues don't detract from its creepiness and shattering violence. *Ek Chuah* is a must-have for any lover of supernatural horror and/or gory action fiction.

—Jesse Luscious

Sweet & Savage: The World Through the Shockumentary Film Lens
Mark Goodall
160 pages • $19.95
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The many imitations of *Mondo Cane* have been so indebted to its confluence of documentary and exploitation film that the genre encompassing them has been tagged "Mondo"—if there is another case of a single motion picture both spawning and giving its name to a genre, I can't think of it offhand.

Sweet & Savage is, in the author's words, "an attempt at defining, through focus on those films most 'significant' to the genre, the magical power of the mondo aesthetic." Mr. Goodall further posits three theses: "that mondo films are a powerful and important aspect of film history;" "that much of today's media output owe a debt to the aesthetics and politics of the mondo film;" and "that mondo films belong to the 'high' genres of documentary and the practices of the avant-garde as much as they do to exploitation, trash and shock cinema."

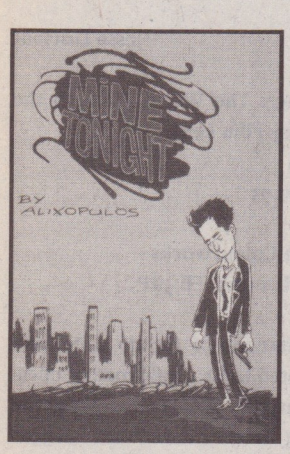
Given the general disrepute in which mondo films are held, this is an ambitious undertaking, but one for which Mr. Goodall is well-prepared even if it requires unleashing a small arsenal of academic terminology at times as he delves into such necessary issues as elements of "truth," ethics, and aesthetics underlying both mondo and conventional documentary filmmaking practices.

Appropriately, the work of Jacopetti and Prosperi is featured prominently: not only was their *Mondo Cane* the shot heard 'round the world of mondo filmmaking, but their *Africa Addio* and *Addio Zio Tom* were (and remain) among the most controversial and disturbing films of the modern era. While *Africa Addio* is sickening in what seems a necessary way, the apparent cynicism and misanthropy of the pair made it especially rough viewing for some (that the version most seen in America, *Africa Blood and Guts*, was butchered in an almost random manner certainly didn't help). When they tackled American slavery and modern race relations in *Addio Zio Tom*, a "documentary" consisting completely of staged scenes with intentional anachronisms and other quasi-pomo tricks, it became easier for many (such as Bill Landis and Michelle Clifford in the Sleazoid Express book) to write it off as pure dirtbag sleaze (albeit well-made dirtbag sleaze). Pauline Kael was moved to call Jacopetti and Prosperi "perhaps the most devious and irresponsible filmmakers who have ever lived." Mr. Goodall maintains: "*Zio Tom* is certainly a difficult, demanding and disturbing film of an embarrassing, shocking period in American history; the film mocks the frayed con-

cepts of American freedom and democracy and maybe it is for this reason that it has been hated so long. Truly everything about the film is exaggerated, amplified and heightened—but rightly so; this was a disgusting and shameful part of history that needed to be 'felt' to be understood."

Those with any interest in mondo films should certainly see at least *Mondo Cane* and *Africa Addio*. This book lends itself to a more critical viewing of both these and other Jacopetti/Prosperi films. Most of the non-Jacopetti/Prosperi films covered in *Sweet & Savage* can be read about therein more rewardingly than they can be viewed, high praise for a critical work indeed.

—Mike Lucas



Mine Tonight
Trevor Alixopulos
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Mine Tonight is a very modern, comic book version of the '40s/'50s detective novel. The main character, Lukas Blum, recounts the tale of his work for an international financier/political renegade (a barely renamed George Soros). He explains how he met George Miklos (the Soros character) at the Seattle WTO protests when young Blum was an anarcho-punk street fighter, and how Miklos found Blum again when Blum was in a post-romance/post-employment freefall. After their reunion, Blum hires on as a sort of special agent for Miklos. All of this is background for the central plotline of the book: in the summer of 2004, Miklos assigns Blum to find five million dollars Miklos has hidden in his own financial web, steal it, and donate the money to the Kerry Presidential Campaign. (Miklos is unable to donate the money directly and believes Bush will win the election simply by out-spending Kerry.)

I love the ideas the author had. The characters are convincing with believable life stories that make them people more than just the sort of shallow creations that are often deployed by authors writing "Political" novels. In this book, "Politics" is driven by real peoples' desires and activities. Miklos/Soros is a charming depiction: a billionaire who holds secret meetings around the world to lend his financial support to swinging the major nations more to the political Left, whether it be funding "Democrats" in post-communist Russia or Anarchists in the US. Miklos/Soros is the white knight of the book, inspired by his brother's death during the 1956 Hungarian Uprising (against the Soviets) to devote himself to helping all the world's Davids in fighting the global Goliaths. While Blum's narration makes some references to Miklos being less than purely good, we only see him behave with honor, humility, and decency. Go, Soros, go! With our current evil regime busy demonizing Soros on the world stage, it's nice to see someone mythologize him! Blum himself is capable of being a creep and knows it (as do we from seeing him in flashbacks to his dissolute years), but the events of the book are his cleansing.

The events depicted are also intelligently thought out. The hiding and stealing of the $5 mil is very cool and convincingly realistic, turning the 21st century landscape of corporate financial shell games and temp agency servitude to the cause of "good." Miklos and Blums' Seattle WTO Protest story is either an excellent Robin Hood myth or a hidden story of reality. A recounting of Blum and Miklos' adventures before the $5 mil scheme allows the author to tell us about a strange island in the Pacific that's worth knowing about for our understanding of what really goes on with international finance.

The author takes a creative risk by placing himself in a pivotal role in the story. When Blum comes to New York City there is only one person he knows there—Alixopulos. This plot device allows Alixopulos to insert one of his short cartoons into the book and to deliver unto Blum a crucial lead in his search. Like everything else in the narrative, Alixopulos pulls off his meta-fiction tactic with aplomb.

I need to complain now. (I am one of those people who dies if they don't complain at least every five minutes, and I'm feeling like my last breath is near.) It's the art! I think this guy wrote a wonderful book, but his drawing is merely functional to my eye. And barely functional, at that. I have trouble discerning depictions of emotion in the art and just find it overly sketch-like and crude. I'd actually love to see DC/Vertigo pick this book up and work with Alixopulos to expand it and redo the art. The narrative content and quality of this book deserves attention from the mainstream book-review press and could get it with the right high-gloss packaging and promotion.

If you like Detective fiction or if you idealize Leftist activists, you'll really enjoy this book. I've read it three times this month and it makes me feel better! Thank you Mr. Alixopulos! More please!

—Seth Hollander

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Picking up a book with a quote from Bill Clinton on the cover isn't something that I would normally do. So, even though aforementioned quote is "referring to something else entirely," I was hesitant about starting to read. Good thing I got over my hesitation, because *We Were Writers* is an excellent collection of six stories, culled from the files of Adam Thomlison, zine writer, Frank magazine contributor, and one of the founders of 40 Watt Spotlight Press.

Although the title of the book is abhorrent to me, and stories all basically deal with the "increasingly slippery path of male-female relations," this isn't some whiny, run of the mill maudlin collection of "life stories" from some sad sack. The pieces of fiction within (I assume they are fictional; I really really hope that they are fictional) range from a sort of noir style piece about a PI tracking down her old lover, to a more experimental story featuring talking booze and tragedy, to a touching story about a guy leaving his small Canadian town for life in the states (not to mention the "hit" of the book, a story in which a man lives in his girlfriend's coatroom to convince her to marry him). The writing in each story is unique, each main character has a strong sense of self, and the landscape of the stories (both emotional and physical) are thought out and obviously well developed.

Honestly, this book is quite good and if you can get past the small size of the binding (4.5 x 5.5") I'm pretty sure you won't have any regrets. Strangely honest and moving even in the most surreal parts, Thomlison's prose is driven and interesting and each story is just long enough to be interesting without getting boring or repetitive.

— Thera Webb

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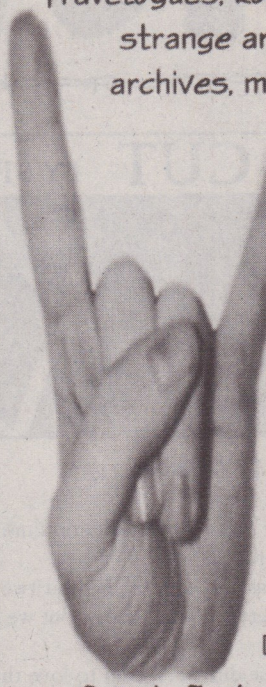

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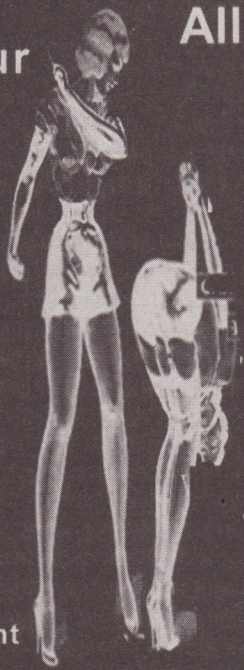

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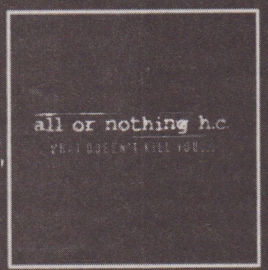

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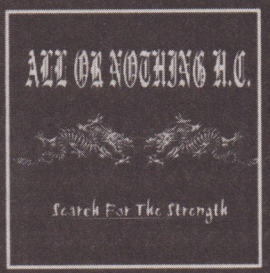

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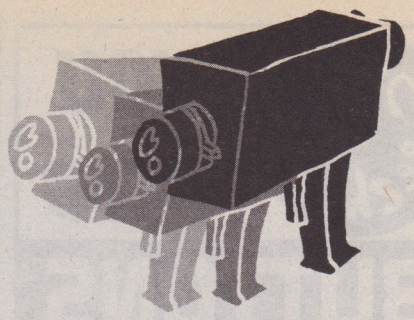

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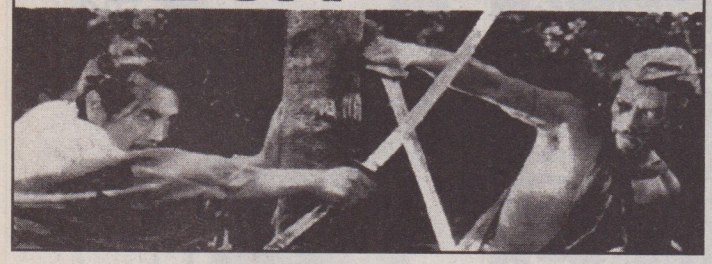


BEYOND THE VALLEY OF INDIES

It can be a battle making independent films. Making cheap independent films can be murder.

This, at least, was the concept behind two of the most violent and amusing indies in very recent memory. But we have to back-peddle a bit beforehand.

Clannish Japanese directors seem to love the idea of doing "projects" together. One of the more successful was the **One Piece!** project, in which two significant directors decided to make a series of shorts under the most minimal of conditions: one video camera, no camerawork, no edits—just one continuous roll of film. Even under such Spartan conditions, the results were surprising; the films were consistently inventive and hilarious, as if the filmmakers had to compensate for their limitations with inventiveness in writing. When you realize how expensive even the most meager of films can be, this type of thing is nothing if not a rebellion against mainstream filmmaking.

A little later, perhaps inspired by this feat, seven other Japanese directors produced still more shorts under the aegis, "Jam Films." These shorts included some of the more famous names in Japanese film, both in front of and behind the camera, and it was so successful that they even made a sequel. While at a foreign film festival, Kitamura's crew was having fun as the two non-drinkers discussed film in a dark corner. What if, Tsutsumi asked, they could make a duel between filmmakers? Using only two actors and one set, they would have to develop an entire story—a fight to the death, but founded on the materials of daily life.

Tsutsumi perhaps had an advantage. He'd just directed a film, consciously adhering to these same rules. But Kitamura was considerably better known and regarded, having directed a series of low budget actioners. (Recently, he also did the more handsomely budgeted **Godzilla: Final Wars**, rumored to be the final Godzilla film.) To further even things out, they agreed to the specifics of the duel: Tsutsumi's would be a film battle to the death between two well-endowed women, while Kitamura's would have to star two middle-aged men.

Tsutsumi dug in his heels and scheduled his film to finish filming within one week. Thus, we have **2LDK**, the first film this the directorial battle.

Two attractive, young actresses have escaped Tokyo's towering rents by house-sitting a producer's loft. In apartment-talk, "2LDK" means "two bedrooms, dining room, and kitchen," and that only begins to describe a living space, which, by Japanese standards, is almost baronial. It's a delicate arrangement. For one thing, the women detest each other. They're up for the same role in a schlocker called **Yakuza Wives**. And then there's the fact that they actually do hate one another, though (at least at the beginning), they vent their worst thoughts in sharp insults only the audience hears.

Nozomi (Eiko Koiko) labels all the bottles in the refrigerator and the bathroom, and becomes furious whenever any of her fluids are a few drops short. Apparently, she's a virgin, but she'd be frustrated regardless. Lana (Nonomi Maho) is a little older, marginally cuter, and more than happy to sleep her way to the top at this point in her career. Which isn't looking good. Each thinks they're cuter than the other, and you wouldn't want to run into either of them when temperatures are running on the high side.

It's amazing how quickly things escalate into full-blown violence; anyone looking for an image of the Japanese woman as shy and restrained had better look elsewhere. The film itself is only 70 minutes long, but less than half of that passes before the women wield a pair of samurai swords, and graduate to a chainsaw (in an amusing quote from **The Shining**). In fact, it's amazing how they're able to find so many different ways of abusing each other. They're clubbed, rubbed, slammed, tossed, and bashed—then nearly drowned and electrocuted.

Meanwhile, the house parrot squawks from the side—the only place where glass shards don't land.

When irony happens here, it's with a thud. Clearly, but **2LDK** is a brisk satire on women's vanity, and does an effective job of showing how two insecure titans make even the most spacious living space seem claustrophobic. The film is funny, but perversely because at times you almost want these two terrors to knock each other senseless. Then it becomes sad...and you have to remind yourself that it's only a movie.

Apparently, making this film was a battle in itself. Not withstanding the pressures of spending nearly every waking hour the set, the actresses contracted nasty cases of the flu, braving 100-degree temperatures while performing their own stunts.

In **Aragami**, the concept of "film as duel" takes on an almost epic dimension, though at times the feel is closer to manga. Two samurai have stumbled in the rain to a temple. The temple itself is a strange amalgam of rustic and Goth, and it's minded by a beautiful woman who never speaks. No sooner have the doors opened that the two men tumble to the ground, dead from arrow punctures and the sword. The film's just begun, and with marvelous economy, its two heroes are already dead.

Then, next morning, one of the men (Takao Osawa) wakes up, amazed that, aside from a small limp, he's apparently as good as new. The aristocratic man who minds the temple (Masayo Kato) is standing there when he awakes. After a meal and some wine (an exotic treat for the warrior), the other man explains the temple's legend: specifically, that it's said to be haunted by a tengu, a mythical creature that snatches its victims from the air. It is synonymous with Aragami, the great spirit of battle. And yes, he seems to be an aragami, a creature who's killed 800 men and remembers each of them. He feels he's reached the end of his time, and wishes to be killed.

You can tell the way things are going. Aragami can't be killed easily. But this limping Warrior is in debt to the creature for saving his life and preserving the remains of his friend.

Despite the limited area in which the action can occur, **Aragami**

develops into a fascinating movie experience. The drama is set in a dark temple; however, the set design, with textiles hanging from a high ceiling, a strange mixes of metal studs and wood, and a double-size, Buddhic stone sculpture of Aragami flanked by votive candles—make this look like no other samurai film. In fact, its baroque set design makes 2LDK seem almost austere in comparison.

Since his directorial debut in **Versus**, Kitamura's work has always been heavy on swordplay and martial arts, and he's always been willing to push the envelope of credibility with extravagant characters. Almost always, his movies are really fun to watch and have that perfect blend of thrills and trashiness so that nobody takes him too seriously.

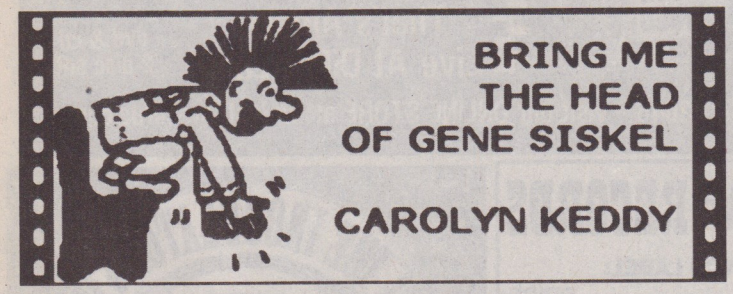
The Swordsman: "How come I'm not dead!?"

Aragami: "I already told you. It's because you ate his liver."

As it happens, Aragami's reputation—to his opponent's shock—is in fact Musashi Miyamoto, the legendary swordsman whose mastery was such that he never lost a challenge. He goes by other names, too, each as fearsome as the last.

Aragami probably does a more proficient job with its pacing than **2LDK**, whose fight scenes whose fight scenes often stretch reality. In both of these films, human life doesn't necessarily end with one slice of the blade, and characters can exhibit an almost cartoon-like ability to regenerate.

The Duel Project takes indie filmmaking to a peculiar, new level. It's never been done before, and only time will tell whether another pair of filmmakers will dare to pick up the gauntlet.



I'VE PROBABLY SLEPT LONGER THAN YOU'VE LIVED

In *Factotum* Charles Bukowski writes, "How in the hell could a man enjoy being awakened at 6:30 am by an alarm clock, leap out of bed, dress, force-feed, brush teeth and hair, and fight traffic to get to a place where essentially you made lots of money for somebody else and were asked to be grateful for the opportunity to do so?" What working person can't relate to that? I recently quit my job of eleven years for basically that reason. Of course, most people need to have a job to make some money to survive life and do what they essentially want to with it. Bukowski worked at crappy jobs in order to be able to fund his quest to be a writer.

The film version of **Factotum** starts out with a definition of its title. It is a person who does different kinds of jobs. Throughout the film Henry Chinaski, Bukowski's literary alter ego, takes on several jobs. He delivers ice, sorts pickles, and dusts statues. Each time he gets fed up with the job and needs a drink so he takes off. His boss usually finds him and fires him. You might think he is lazy, but it seems he works just to make enough money to survive for a while. He has a place to live, continually writes and mails stories to various magazines and drinks in bars. Then when the money is gone, he goes off to find another menial job to earn some more.

That premise combined with two love interests and a venture into horse racing make up the whole of **Factotum**. Which in the hands of most people would make a pretty mundane movie. Fortunately, Bukowski's writing focused on these seemingly bland aspects of life and them made very entertaining. Director Bent Hamer and his co-writer Jim Stark had good source material to use. The film is entertaining. There are some very funny scenes. But if you are looking for one of those uplifting films where the main character is redeemed at the end, this isn't the film for you. In fact, the ending chooses to rely on one of the more autobiographical aspects of Bukowski's life. His former landlady sits in her apartment opening the accumulating collection of his letters from potential publishers.

The main problem with **Factotum** is that Matt Dillon, who plays Chinaski, is too good looking. As with most Hollywood movies, the person the film is based on isn't as attractive as the movie star playing him. Dillon does a good job at get down all of Bukowski's mannerisms and speech, but his face still looks too pretty. If you've seen pictures of Bukowski, it's hard to accept Dillon as the same hard drinking man.

After seeing **Factotum**, I decided to see the documentary **Bukowski: Born into This**. I am not a Bukowski fan by any means. I find the alcoholism and degradation of women can get to be a bit too tedious for me. I never saw **Barfly**. I kept trying to, but after falling asleep three times, I gave up. Yet I am always willing to discover a new way of looking at things so off to the video store I go.

Bukowski: Born into This does a good of trying to show the more personal side of Bukowski. He is a man who was abused as a child, was rejected by women and publishers and found his solace in a bottle. It paints a very sympathetic picture of him.

Bukowski was unpopular in high school due to his severe case of acne. He didn't go to his prom because he was too afraid to ask a date. Instead, he stood outside, his face wrapped in toilet paper to stop the bleeding zits.

After years of mindless jobs and his poems appearing in magazines and newspapers, including writing a column for an LA newspaper, Bukowski's publishing dreams are realized when John Martin starts Black Sparrow Press solely to publish Bukowski's work. His poems start to sell and at Martin's request Bukowski writes his first novel *Post Office*. Martin's encouragement and financial support leads Bukowski to quit his job at the post office and write full time.

Filmmaker Taylor Hackford documented Bukowski's trip to San Francisco in the early '70s. Bukowski was going to San Francisco for the first time to do a reading arranged by Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Hackford recalls that he filmed Bukowski on the plane as he proceeded to get drunk. His drunken stupor lasted throughout his San Francisco trip and was documented in Hackford's film. When Bukowski wrote about the experience later in his LA newspaper column, he insulted the filmmaker. When Hackford called him on it, he responded, "I am the hero of my stories".

The requisite documentary inclusion of celebrities citing their fandom is particularly annoying in this documentary. Bono rambles on about what a fan he is which works up to an anecdote about Sean Penn being at his house and calling Bukowski on the phone. It creeps me out. Bukowski and his wife later go to a U2 concert in LA and Bono claims that Bukowski is impressed by how many people come to see the band. Geesh.

The most disturbing scene of the documentary is when Bukowski and his second wife Linda sit down for an interview on camera. Seemingly unprovoked Bukowski starts yelling at his wife and hitting her. The camera rolls and none of the film crew make a move to stop what is happening. Linda yells back. There are some tears. Then she sits down and the interview continues. It is very uncomfortable to watch and impossible not to wonder why she puts up with it. I am sure that wasn't the first time. Then revealing my extreme cynical nature, I also couldn't help thinking that maybe she was aware that he won't be around for much longer and she will inherit his legacy so she'll put up with it for a while more. I certainly hope that wasn't the case.

An extra on the DVD is the last camera appearance of Bukowski filmed by Linda in which he heaps praise on her and their cat too. Maybe it was just the booze all along.

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to Carolyn Keddy, PO Box 460402, San Francisco, CA 94146-0402. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area, you can let me know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. I will go see it.

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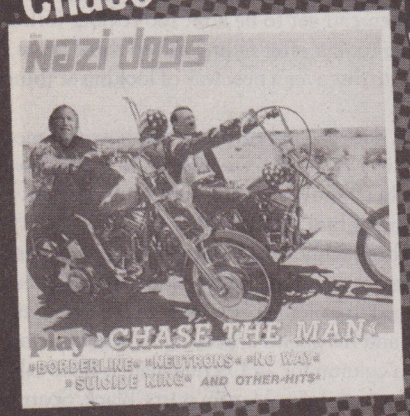

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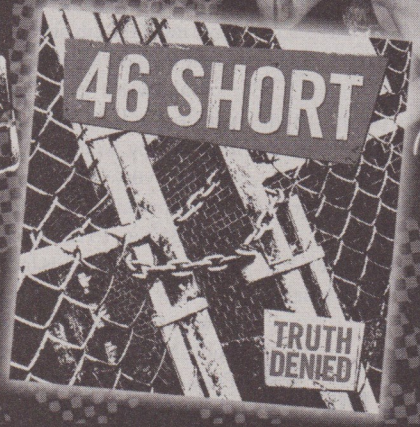

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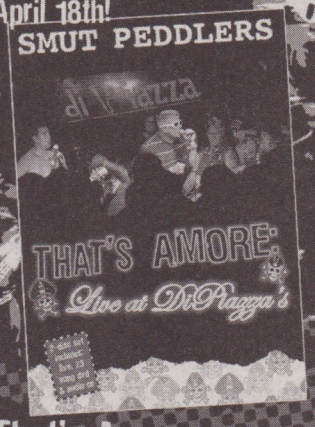

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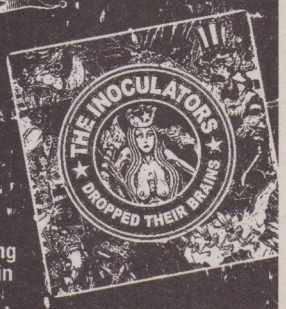

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RECORDS

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Reviewers: Tim Brooks (TB), Mitch Cardwell (MC), Rob Coons (RC), Carl Cordova (CC), Paul Curran (PC), Andy Darling (AD), Dr. Dante (DD), Sean Dougan (SD), Nic Eagle (NE), Jonathan Floyd (JF), Jeff Heermann (JH), Vince Horner (VH), Mike Howes (MH), Layla Gibbon (LG), Chris Hubbard (CS), Kenny Kaos (KK), Carolyn Keddy (CK), Ramsey Kanaan (RK), Will Kinser (WK), Ray Lujan (RL), Allan McNaughton (AM), Golnar Nikpour (GN), Bruce Roehrs (BR), Ken Sanderson (KS), Martin Sorrondeguy (MS), Steve Spinali (SS), Brian Stern (BS), Stevo (ST), Ryan Wells (RW), Shane White (SW).

ABOUT TO SNAP – "One Sided" EP

A five-song one-sided 7" of angry Canadians providing us with another take on the very-modern-to-these-ears but still "old school" hardcore sound. There is something burly about the singer's vocals that reminds me of the classic Japanese sound, but I think that is probably more of a coincidence than a conscious decision. I imagine that ABOUT TO SNAP is into VOORHEES or aggro, one-dimensional early '80s thrash like SOA or something, but their chugga-tinged breakdowns and guitar tone make them seem sort of like a zillion other modern angry bro HC bands to me. I dunno, this is well-executed but still remains as boring as can be. Sorry, dudes. (GN)
(Specimen 32, www.specimen32.com)

ADRIAN AND THE SICKNESS – "Adrian for President" CD

This CD looks like something their publicist put together to send out to labels and clubs; seriously not a proper release. It's super slick, super shitty "I wanna sign to a major label" girl-fronted gunk. Music for fans of Hot Topic and the Warped Tour. Totally redundant. (LG)
(no address)

THE AGENDA – "Articulation" EP

Listening to this record makes me wants to break out my old military shirt with all my favorite band names written in marker and go skate a pool. OK, the truth is that I never could skate—but I did own the shirt. If I were making that shirt today the AGENDA would be on their right along with ILL REPUTE, AGRESSION, and CODE OF HONOR. You might want to throw in a modern band too, like fellow Minnesotans FORMALDEHYDE JUNKIES. I can honestly say, go get this. (JF)
(PO Box 6371, Minneapolis, MN 55406)

AL KAPOTT – "Super Curé" LP

This record is so warped it only just about plays, which is kind of a drag because I think it's the only good thing I got for review this month. The cover is pretty horrific and misleading: an incredibly ugly rendering of a caveman stumbling through a cityscape that looks like it was drawn by an '80s wizards-and-warlocks comic book nerd. The music, however, is awesome—really classic and anthemic early '80s French punk, totally feel-good and raging; I wish I could actually listen to the record beyond the first two songs! *So annoying!* Record labels—package your records well or label them so that the mail service keeps them away from heat or something… You should get this record anyway; it's super great, super punk, total inspiration music. (LG)
(Dirty Punk, BP 10302, 59666 Villeneuve d'Ascq Cedex, FRANCE)

AMOEBA MEN – "Let the Infection Set In" CD

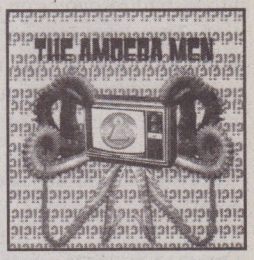
I kinda wanna like this, there is some taste in effect here, dosing up on the late-'90s take on early-'80s wave-punk with the DEAD KENNEDYS as a prime influence. Say, *Frankenchrist* era. But, alas, the sum of the parts (spacey guitar, echoey vocals, random synth effects) does not add up to something I'm gonna want to spin more than I already have. Lacks the grin-inducing great song, delivers just random shards of smart ideas stretched too thin over skeletal songs. (RW)
(CNP, PO Box 14555, Richmond, VA 23221)

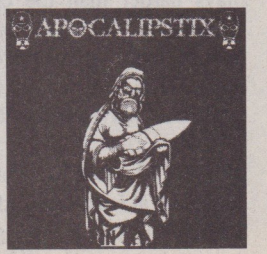
AMPERE / SINALOA – split CD

When I first hit play I was really excited. AMPERE plays the heavy emo that I'm into, not unlike FUNERAL DINER or TAKARU. Heavy guitar and screamo vocals, but plenty of melodic sections and octaves on the guitar. The more I listened to them the more I realized I have a new band to add to the very short list titled "good emo." And then there is SINALOA, which is everything *not* interesting that has come about because of RITES OF SPRING. Melodic, whiney, and vague. (MH)
(Ebullition, PO Box 680, Goleta, CA 93116)

THE ANSWER LIES / TULSA – split EP

I've got THE ANSWER LIES' number. I know it. It's on the tip of my tongue but it won't jump off. They're a bit hard to pin down. I envision a lot of these songs like MOTÖRHEAD songs with a punk singer and cranked on 45 rpm. Put in some late '80s HC with a fifth of whiskey in it and you've got a good time from Los Cruces. TULSA on the other hand is what I think of when I think of Bay Area punk. All heart with a Country-Club-40-oz-and-Sparks-fueled chorus. These guys actually used to live in Tulsa but relocated to the Bay. I wonder if any of them have HICKEY tattoos. (ST)
(Repulsion, 2552 N. Booth St, Milwaukee, WI 53212, myspace.com/repulsionrcs)





RECORDS

L'ANTIETAM / FURNACE – split EP

You know what's weird is as I listened to this I could smell the basement you're likely to see these guys in. I could hear my ears ringing afterward. I could feel the irritation that I lost some of my hearing forever over some bullshit basement show with bands I couldn't tell apart because the PA sucked. I also realized that only place you can truly appreciate bands like this is on a decent recording and a place with a decent sound system. L'ANTIETAM plays spastic screamy-core of some sort. In a different time I might have said screamo but the word has lost all meaning. FURNACE puts some borderline sludge into the gears to heavy it up a bit. Both bands score one with decent recordings. Now if the basements of America will invest in a decent PA we've got ourselves a deal. (ST)
(The Electric Human Project, 500 S. Union St, Wilmington, DE 19805, electrichumanproject .com)

ANXIETY – "Bleak" CD

ANXIETY plays sludgy, metallic punk with gruff vocals and right-on political lyrics. The music is basic, but you can totally mosh to it, and the lyric sheet is full of good info/insight/resources on current American politics. There are lots of samples interspersed throughout that are just as entertaining as the rock…a multi-media punk rock experience from former members of STIKKY! (PC)
(Stress Related Tension Music, PO Box 449, Placerville, CA 95667, stressrelatedtensionmusic .com)

APOCALIPSTIX – "War in My Head" EP

Poppy punk meets crust with a Muppet on vocals. Isn't there a short story about three women in a punk band, post apocalypse, traveling around with the same name? The female vocals are so high and scratchy and, well, just downright unique and awful. From Bremen, Germany, with good intentions. (MH)
(No Rules/Bolzkow, c/o Lobuschstr, 37-39 22765 Hamburg, GERMANY)

APPLICATORS – "My Weapon" CD

Sort of rough-and-ready, sort of mainstream disguised as 90s-style alternative rock, sort of bar band. More sprawling and expansive than the stuff that usually sneaks under the limbo bar—there's touches of slick rock instrumentation and, I believe, tasteful synth. The APPLICATORS are an all-female five-piece band that plays harder than the current line-up of the CONTRACTIONS but don't really grab me—I admire their verve more than I enjoy their music. (JH)
(Hairball 8, www.hairball8.com)

ARGETTI – "In My Shoes" CD

I guess at least they didn't call it *In My Eyes*. These four Italian youngsters are full of the excitement, sincerity, and passion of the STRIKE ANYWHERE brand of modern melodic hardcore. Throw in early DAG NASTY and AT THE DRIVE-IN, and, well, there's a bit of sauce to go with the spaghetti. They even have an emo song about lost friendship called "Santa Barbara!" I have heard a lot worse, though. (RK)
(Goodwill, www.goodwillrecords.net)

ASMEREIR – "La Furia del Destroysaso" CD

This is the first official release by Peruvian punkers ASMEREIR, though four bootleg CD-Rs preceded this CD. The music is compiled over a number of years, and notably, this band features members of hardcore legends ATAQUE FRONTAL and current Bay Area thrashers DEADFALL. The music on the CD is in a wide range—like you'd expect from a band with such a pedigree, there is a lot of amazing, angry thrashing hardcore on this disc, but there are also some crazy guitar breaks, a bunch of stop-on-a-dime ska breakdowns, a slight touch of metal influence, and a bunch of poppier songs. My favorite songs are definitely the fast, pissed-off ones, but somehow this band manages to make this hodgepodge mix of styles work. A cool and worthy release. (GN)
(Union X, no address)

ASS – "Sink" CD

Some vegan punk from Minneapolis on Profane. The vocals are growled out but the music is pretty melodic, with simple guitar lines rather than raging, epic, hesh-tastic axe symphonies. So it's more punk-sounding than crust. I really do not like this, though it's not hateful, it's just kind of annoying. They would totally fit in at a Mission punk generator show if that means something to you. This lyric is pretty rad: "In high school I was a punching bag, when I got out I was a punching fag." (LG)
(Profane Existence, profaneexistence.com)

ATTACK! VIPERS! – "Four Short Hymns to the Patron Saint of Bare Knuckle Boxing" EP

I like the aesthetic of this band more than I like the actual music. Swirling emo-core like GLASS AND ASHES meeting BOTCH head on. It's just too choppy and emo for me, but if you dig those vibes you will love this shit. (TB)
(Rat Patrol, www.ratpatrolrecs.com)

AVATARS – "Never a Good Time" CD

If we were to flashback three or four years ago, a band like the AVATARS would have their album released by Sympathy For The Record Industry and be on tour with the DIRTBOMBS or VON BONDIES. You guessed it: capable Michigan garage punk with female vocals. Although they throw a wrench in things by looking every bit like a cookie-cutter power pop band, this is definitely from the same school as bands like the FONDAS or the COME-ONS. Nothing earthshaking, but fans of that scene might wanna check it out. (MC)
(No Fun, www.nofunrecords.com)

BAD REACTION – "Symptoms of Youth" CD

This is some melodic hardcore punk from Southern California. I definitely hear some West Coast punk influences with a smidgen of a ZERO BOYS flavor. The songs are strong and upbeat with forceful yet understandable vocals. These tracks aren't going to blow your socks off, but the toe-tapping catchiness is undeniable. (RC)
(Destroy All, PO Box 520, Van Nuys, CA 91408)

BASTARDS – "Jarjeton Maailma" LP

The BASTARDS' first full album—hailing from their peak period in Finnish HC in 1983—is almost a distillation of their iconic style, oft copied through the years. The trademark galloping drum intros, discordant repeating riffs, shouted vocals, and occasional chugga-chugga guitar sections are a potent combination—especially on the fastest tunes, like "Isanmaa" and "Jumalan Sotilaat." As their song structures have always been on the repetitive side, these tracks work best when they're short and fast. This is the first official re-release of the record, with original artwork. In retrospect, this is not as blistering as output by bands like TERVEET KÄDET or early KAAOS, but it still stands on its own. (SS)
(Andreas Hahn, An der Kohtranke 7, 31535 Neustadt, GERMANY)

BLACKBIRDS – "(The) Avian Influenza" EP

What we have here is seven songs of dark, AMERICAN NIGHTMARE influenced, modern hardcore with pedestrian drum playing and a horrible snare sound. Pass. (CC)
(Specimen 32, www.specimen32.com)

THE BLAKHIV – "Any Way She Wants It" CDEP

This five-tracker proudly proclaims that it was recorded live on the radio in Reykjavik—that's the capital of Iceland, for you geographically challenged folks. There's no other info on the band, other than a trio of stylish looking heads in silhouette. They sound like they must be Swedish, i.e., they turn in five short blasts of dirty rock 'n' roll in that DEAD BOYS-meets-lo-fi-ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN style. It was mixed by a dude called Tryggvi in Madison, WI, so who knows. Mebbe they aren't Swedish after all. Or mebbe they just employed an Icelandic émigré to twist the knobs. (RK)
(Lucid, no address)

BLANK STARE – "Suicide" EP

I like the fact that BLANK STARE's sound keeps one foot in the modern realm, while still paying respect to the rich history of hardcore. These three songs of solid, fast hardcore are good, but not good *enough* to stand alone on a $4 EP. (CC)
(Refuse, www.refuserecords.prv.pl)

BLANK STARE – "Suicide" EP

I remember reviewing BLANK STARE's previous EP; it was pretty decent, nothing to get excited about. But this new three-song 7" is great. Fucking angry, pounding hardcore. Usually bands that play this fast forget to write actual songs, but not so here. "Violence," the best track, features a sped-up POISON IDEA-circa-*Pick Your King*-style riff (a comparison I don't throw around lightly). Well done. (CS)
(Refuse, www.refuserecords.prv.pl)

BORN/DEAD – "Endless War…Repetition" CD

This CD compiles Bay Area stalwarts BORN/DEAD's recent vinyl output. The oldest of it, their side of a split LP with CONSUME, dates back a few years, while the most recent stuff was released on a 12" and 7" last year. This CD showcases all of the reasons that BORN/DEAD have become one of the premier anarcho-hardcore bands in the country over the past few years: thoughtful, political lyrics screamed over raging, angry CHRIST ON PARADE-meets-BEHIND ENEMY LINES-inspired hardcore punk. Get this if you don't already have the vinyl. (GN)
(Prank, PO Box 410892, San Francisco, CA 94141, www.prankrecords.com)

BOYS CLUB – "This Is My Face" EP

.....man, I'm bummed out.....the sleeve to this little piece of shit looked so good that my hopes were high for this one.....but here's where that old saying comes in 'bout judging books by the cover, cuz this here turkey is a stinky turd for sure, no doubt about it!!!!!!!!!!! Boring wanna-be garage done by youngsters who were still shitting in their Huggies when the bands that did this kinda stuff *good* were going at it!!!!!!!! I've listened to this shit platter five times now and my opinion is still the same, so *fuck you*!!!!!!! Best stick with your iPod generation kiddies.....you ain't cutting it in mine!!!!!!! (SW)
(Three Dimensional, 201 W. 15th St. Apt. 208, Minneapolis, NM 55403)

BREATHILIZOR / MINCH – split EP

Two Ohio bands share this split. BREATHILIZOR plays silly, lo-fi, GWAR-like rock/metal (pardon me if I don't have enough metal knowledge to come up with a more accurate comparison). MINCH is just some dudes banging on instruments and screaming; probably recorded in a basement. The most entertaining part is the funny samples between tracks. These bands are probably fun to see if they're your friends—and certainly they are having fun themselves. There must be a fan base for this kind of shit, otherwise who would've put out this record? If muddy, noisy wackiness is your cup of pee… (PC)
($6 ppd: Anthony Godinez, 10101 Rincon Ave., Pacoima, CA 91331)

BRING YOUR OWN WEAPON – "Three Strikes" CD

Basic workin' man redneck hardcore from Phoenix, with country-music–styled "drunk 'n' broke, cheatin' woman" themes (much more misogyny: "Six days a week, ten hours a day/And that bitch takes all my pay"), literally a "bomb the towelheads" song (uh…isn't our right wing government doing that already…like, daily?), and songs about Hot Topic poseurs, being jobless, and being stuck in traffic ("Gridlock"—which actually takes a fun kind of musical left turn into later DESCENDENTS' zaniness)… The music is mostly perfunctory, basic, speedy, throttling hardcore, played well enough; but combined with the dumbshit lyrics, there's nothing redeeming even in a "so bad it's good, so wrong it's right" way to warrant support. (KS)
(Malt Soda, PO Box 617127, Orlando, CA 32861, www.maltsoda.com)

THE BULLYS – "BQE Overdrive" CD

Rock-inspired punk rock from all the way over on the cold, desolate, barren lands of America's East Coast. Sounds like if you mixed a very obnoxious version of the WORKING STIFFS with a very flat version of AC/DC. Unfortunate to say the least. "Pop is for Fags" (track four)—guess I'm a raging homosexual, boys. (SD)
(www.thebullys.com)

THE CANCER KIDS – "The Possible Dream" LP

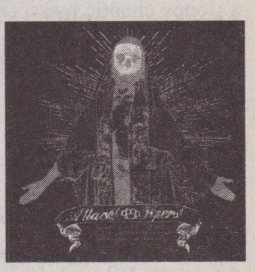
Blown-out punk, with high-energy fast hardcore parts steering toward the DROPDEAD side of things but usually diverting into driving, hook-filled rocking parts not unlike DAS OATH. The playing is solid and the tunes are well assembled. Lyrics range from tongue-in-cheek to downright cheeky. Harping on personal scene identity gets this reviewer a little snoozy, but the music makes up for it. Attempts to address and challenge the tough issues like punk aesthetic, Pushead, and Havoc, fall miserably short. This sort of thing has been done better before (without mundane rhyming-lyrics touting your own band...). As I said though, it's tongue-in-cheek. In contrast, tracks like "9021Oi!" are lyrically insightful and hilarious. Check it out. (BS)
(Youth Attack, www.ihateyouthattack.com)

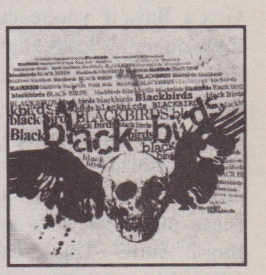
CASKET ARCHITECTS – "Dance on the Death Nerve" CD

From the looks of this CD I was expecting something in the realm of emo/goth/metal/hipster music, and actually that's not too far off. The vocals are screamo-y and a little bit spooky, while the music mixes energetic, metal-influenced punk with a smidgen of that MONORCHID-style quirkiness. The coolest part is the spacey keyboard and guitar sounds that remind me of YEAR FUTURE. Despite not being the kind of music I generally get into, I think this record is pretty good! (PC)
(Glacial, www.casketarchitects.com)

CHICKENHAWK / I BREATHE SPEARS / WITH SCISSORS – split CD

Minimal information on these three UK bands—stark graphics, no lyrics, and only URLs for their MySpace





pages (which is just insulting). It leaves people no reason not to simply download this record for free as seemingly no care or thought was put into its presentation and packaging. The two tracks from CHICKENHAWK are kind of lower-fi nu metal with KORN/SYSTEM OF A DOWN-esque breakdowns. I BREATHE SPEARS' four tracks still corner with metallic elements but get a little more heavy-handed with power violence-style ponderousness and pound, and RORSCHACH-style vocal slather smushed out with raw punk-style delivery and crunch. WITH SCISSORS still has the tech-y, nu metal vibe, turning on speedy SYSTEM OF A DOWN-style quirkiness with screechy vocals, but largely it descends into a chaotic, slap-bass laden "throw everything in the mix" experiment where the musicians seemingly know enough about music to know how to "throw everything in" but not enough about music to know when leave stuff out, resulting in a sloppy chaotic mess. (KS)
(Millipeed, 25 Avenue Rd, Portswood, Southamption SO14 61R, UNITED KINGDOM, www.millipeedrecords.co.uk)

CHOOSE YOUR POISON – "Thrashed to Ribbons" EP

Thrash from Wisconsin, which for some reason is fun to say. I got so curious where Appleton, WI, was that I looked it up on a map—on Lake Winnebago and not that far from Green Bay, if you're curious. This 7" really grew on me. It leans slightly in the metal direction and most tracks are speedy. They have some darn good lyrics—including a great probike song, "Let the Good Times Roll," and indirect anarchist/don't-work-for-the-Man lyrics on "Calling in Dead." I shouldn't leave out the sense of humor with lines like "Drink skate thrash burn." Think BONES BRIGADE or CRUCIAL UNIT. "Let's Fucking Go," Wisconsin! (MH)
(Poison Estate, 708 N. Lawe St, Appleton, WI 54911)

CHUCK NORRIS EXPERIMENT – "Voltage Volume" CD

Second full-length from these Swede rock 'n' rollers. Like the Japanese, the Swedes seem to have an uncanny knack for taking quintessential American sounds and coming up with something even better than the originals. In this case (surprise, surprise), they've taken that garage/power-pop/rock 'n' roll sound and turned in an incredibly good copy of the NEW BOMB TURKS, early SAINTS, and, well, those other Scandinavian bands that do this so well. Terrible name, it has to be said, but perhaps the "irony" is lost in translation. The rock, however, translates very well. 17 tracks of pure rock 'n' roll heaven. (RK)
(Off the Hip, www.offthehip.com.au)

CIRCUS ACT – "This Is Your Destination" CD

I know nothing of this outfit, but have been extremely pleased to make their acquaintance via this disc. Nine tracks of suitably deranged and driving punk, of sorts. They manage to mix up, in a very appealing manner, the best bits of NOMEANSNO, RUDIMENTARY PENI, and the hoarse emotion of HOT WATER MUSIC. It all makes sense when you're listening to it, trust me. (RK)
(Milliepeed, www.milliepeedrecords.co.uk)

CIRCUS ACT – "This Is Your Destination" CD

Dynamic post hardcore? I'm not really hearing a whole lot of dynamics or hardcore but this is about as lifeless as a post. So the one sheet was a third right. Also I was told there would be a "triple vocalled (sic) attack" and I've yet to hear more than one dude on this thing. False "triple vocalled (sic) attack" advertising! Scoundrels. Can you believe that the UK used to give us some of the best music known to man and yet does little but crank out total turds these days? The one thing this has going for it…it's not "dance punk." (ST)
(Milliepeed, www.milliepeedrecords.co.uk)

CIVIL WAR / BRAINDEAD split – CD

CIVIL WAR and BRAINDEAD both play punk mixed with ska, the BRAINDEAD portion of the disc is a bit more palatable of the two, their ska parts sounding more rooted in '80s American ska than CIVIL WAR whom have a more complicated sound rooted in contemporary LEFTOVER CRACK and RANCID meets WOLFBRIGADE. BRAINDEAD transitions between genres pretty well, the songs are well written, they can make the dynamics changes work, and they throw in some heavy power waltz breakdowns with gruff vocals. Interesting, not exactly my thing, but they seem good at what they're doing... (BS)
(Crashlanding, www.crashlandingrecords.com)

COBRA SKULLS – "Draw Muhammad" CD

You wouldn't think so from the silly record art and the even sillier song titles, but COBRA SKULLS play some really catchy, intelligent, political punk. Their style could be compared to the better, middle-period BAD RELIGION with its wordy verses and sing-along choruses, while their country-tinged feeling seems to be a distillation of the non-annoying elements of SOCIAL DISTORTION and AGAINST ME! The recording is excellent and the band's talent shines through. Worth a listen, for sure. (PC)
(Humaniterrorist, www.cobraskulls.com)

COLDBRINGER – "Lust and Ambition" 12"

"Dark, melodic" hardcore from Portland with excellent gravel-throated vocals that are more Frankie Stubbs than Lemmy but definitely pay homage to both. I know that first description has become a bit of a catch-all cliché but I have to say COLDBRINGER do it right—the songwriting is catchy, the guitar leads are melodic, and again, those vocals—amazing. (AM)
(Dead Ideas, PO Box 851, Austin, TX 78767)

COMPLETE CONTROL / KRUM BUMS – "Death Can Wait" split CD

Two of Austin, Texas' finest exponents of bristles 'n' boots street punk team up with TKO Records to bring you this CD, which is also available as a double 7", I believe. Each band contributes two originals and a cover of the other band. Although I was a fan of COMPLETE CONTROL's *Reaction* LP, their tracks on this aren't grabbing me as much for some reason. It's the KRUM BUMS that are really standing out, which I wasn't expecting. The vocals in particular are totally brutal. Don't get me wrong, COMPLETE CONTROL put in a good showing in the first half, but the KRUM BUMS came out after halftime and really put the boot in. A game of two halves, but at the end of the day, etc. (AM)
(TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave, Huntington Beach, CA 92648, www.tkorecords.com)

CONQUEST FOR DEATH – "Beyond the Hidden Valley of the Last of the V-8 Interceptors" EP

As you are probably aware, this band contains folks from ASSFORT, ARTIMUS PYLE, and WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? Now combine the intensity of said bands and you get CONQUEST FOR DEATH. The tunes here are raging fast thrash with a dark edge of distortion and blistering vocals. Plus Devon's always insightful lyrics are on-point as usual. And I have to mention that the main riff in the song "Wake Up Screaming" sounds a lot like SEPTIC DEATH's "Thaw (Cold World)." I was totally caught off guard with the speed and intensity here and in all honesty the EP is a lot better than I was expecting. But questions remain: Is the band really named after the NECROS record? And why is Robert now playing with four bass strings? (RC)
(Wajlemac, PO Box 8039, Emeryville, CA 94662)

THE COPYRIGHTS – "Mutiny Pop" CD

Good pop punk with basic music and good hooks on the vocal front. Dare I say the old "Lookout" sound. A little GROOVIE GHOULIES, QUEERS, and SCREACHING WEASEL. Definitely on the punk side, this is a good full length from these pop devotees. (RL)
(Insubordination, no address)

CRETEENS – "4 Track Blues" EP

Soaked in that brilliant Memphis racket with a healthy dose of distorted fuzzed out blues.

Suppose you were to cross the CRAMPS with the HUNCHES, you'd end up having these no-marks at your dinner table. That sweet, lo-fi dirge can't even manage to hide the grooves, the hooks, and some unadulterated '60s garage worship. Bingo. (SD)
(Contaminated, c/o Alicja Trout, PO Box 41953, Memphis TN 38174. www.contaminatedrecords.com)

CRIMINAL CLASS USA – "Is Hush Hush Revolution" CD

They have little in common with the legendary (well, I really liked 'em anyways!) '80s UK Oi band of the same name (less the USA bit of course). Well, actually, that's not really true. Like the STOCKYARD STOICS, they have that sort of working stiff thing down, both in image (wifebeaters, flat caps, tattoos) and in lyrical concerns. Like their Brit predecessors, they also have a rather excellent line in left-wing politics. Musically, they tread a lot more in the punky/folky (with some nice slide guitar) realm popularized by AGAINST ME! I really liked the Brit CRIMINAL CLASS. I like the Yanks too. And the STOCKYARD STOICS, come to think of it. I guess it all makes sense. (RK)
(www.myspace.com/criminalclassusa)

CRUCIAL SECTION / HIT ME BACK – split EP

Tokyo's CRUCIAL SECTION lets loose with three tracks of fast, hectic hardcore that sticks pretty close to the Japanese thrash-core playbook. But I can't get past the vocals: from youth shouts on "Fight the Good Fight" to melodic singing on "Leaving to Others," it's just not working. The HIT ME BACK side is much more straightforward, energetic, and powerful. Despite song titles like "Black and White Rainbow" and "Dance Party Revolution," it's definitely the preferred listen. (VH)
(625, www.625thrash.com)

THE CRUSTIES – "Rat's Revenge" CD

I don't even want to know what they did to "Rat" to deserve this kind of revenge… Fuck. I could write a novel about the lyrics and artwork alone…or about the overly dramatic and inept vocalist…or about the obnoxious MEGADETH guitar leads…or about what seems to be a horn section on track three…but unfortunately, the title "Please Kill Me" has already been taken. (VH)
(Beer City, www.beercityrecords.com)

DARK – "Scream Until We Die" CD

I went though the booklet that comes with this double-CD comp and I believe the only vinyl these guys managed back in their day was one track on the *Cleveland Confidential* LP 1982, and a few on the *New Hope* comp LP from 1983 (which they themselves organized). Considering how good these guys were, that's a real tragedy. They do a great inland (very inland—Cleveland, Ohio, in fact) take on the fast, moody goth punk coming out of LA and San Francisco at the time that is best personified by the likes of TSOL. They've got the great big skull-with-mohawk cartoon on the front cover, so there ya go. This stuff is the total personification of early-mid-'80s American teen attitude teetering on the edge of unrespectability. Just listening to this thing you can almost hear the body count of suburban kids who didn't make it past their mid-20s racking up... There were a million shitty bands that tried to pull this sound off but these guys did it. It's actually kind of depressing to listen to...perfect! (RW)
(Grand Theft Audio, PMB 313, 501 W. Glenoaks Blvd., Glendale, CA 91202)

DCOI! – "The Bleeding" EP

This fine little record contains fucking out-of-control punk with a screamer on vocals and a multi-talented guitar player baked by the reliable foundation of bass and drum. The well-rehearsed band allows Jason to scream his fucking head off! This whole package works really well. When DCOI! slows things down a bit you realize that these guys are quite talented. The lyrics convey some of the discomfort one experiences in this volatile fucked-up world. This punk rock is fucking urgent! This record is recommended! (BR)
(Glue Rot, PO Box 1857, El Cerrito, CA 94530, gluerotrecords.com)

DEATH IS NOT GLAMOROUS – "Undercurrents" CDEP

Six-tracker from these Norwegian hardcore punkers, in the vein of LIFETIME, SHELTER...melodic hardcore, brimming with intention and passion. This is apparently their second 7"/CDEP. And the CD version I'm blessed with has an extra track not on the vinyl, for, er, all you CD collectors out there!? They do sound a lot like LIFETIME, and I'm digging it. Lucky I got the extra track... (RK)
(Dead and Gone, www.deadandgonerecords.com)

THE DEATH OF HER MONEY "Scandinavian Accent" EP

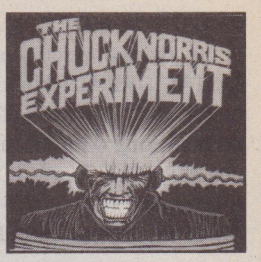
Heavy, plotting, and sludgy jams on this two-song single. "Your Time Is Over," the B-side, is the standout song here. It could easily be a lost track on the first SLEEP album, in fact vocally it's near dead on, the guitars sound more developed, good counter melodies and rhythms, the song itself is epic and a great listen. (BS)
(Rat Patrol, ratpatrolrecs.com)

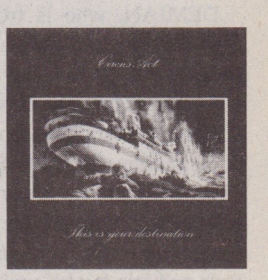
DECONDITIONED – "Big Act / Compartment K3"

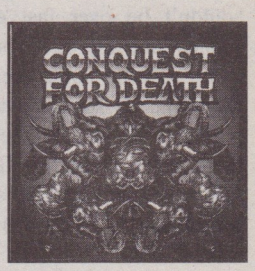
This band unfortunately just played their last ever shows. Too bad, because I think they were under-appreciated while they were around. This 7" is a fitting send-off though. Two songs of intense JESUS LIZARD/SCRATCH ACID-influenced hardcore. You heard me right. One song is fast and spasmodic, the other slow and brooding. On both, the later-era BLACK FLAG-influenced guitar dominates. This band was doing its own thing, and I sincerely hope the different members continue to make music. (AM)
($5 ppd: Beginning Era, 715 NE Failing St, Portland, OR 97212, beginningerarecords@yahoo.com)

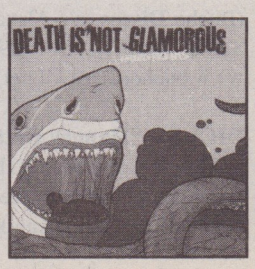
DEJA MORT / TEKKEN – split EP

Varied little split from these Frenchies, TEKKEN kicks it off with some distort-o-hardcore not unlike a rougher version of DAS OATH, complete with vocals that sound like a little kid being strangled. Not bad. The winner by









far is DEJA MORT, who throws down some pretty twisted electro punk, very much like METAL URBAIN (the cover is even a rip off of METAL URBAIN). Total tweaked out '70s style rocking with catchy as fuck choruses—this shit rules. Worth it for the DEJA MORT side alone. (TB)
(Trahison, www.trahisonrecords.com)

DEMIAN / MERKIT – split EP

DEMIAN, who is from Brazil, blast their way through six songs of metallic thrash. The songs are crazy fast and the vocals are angrily screeched. The only drawback here is that the drumming sounds kind of muffled to the point of distraction. On the flipside, MERKIT throws down a couple of songs that cull a variety of influences. At times they remind me of '90s bands like OTTAWA and ACRID. Take that style and mix it with some straight up fast hardcore and you got yourself a fine record. And of course MERKIT caps off their side with a worthwhile "Tribute to D-Beat," just to throw you off a bit. Recommended! (RC)
($4 ppd: 4447 St. Clair Avenue, Ft. Myers, FL 33903)

DENNIS – "Songs in the Key of Dennis" EP

This record was a workout on my patience. I'm not one of those reviewers who skip around on a record to get the gist of it. I listened to this whole thing—a 7" on 45 rpm that couldn't be over fast enough. The vocalist sounds like my little brother throwing a fit while reciting some weak poetry. I honestly cannot justify spending any more time describing this. Thankfully there were only 300 of these made. Yaaargh! (ST)
(Spicy Soup Productions, 191 Brairwood Dr, Manchester, CT 06040,)

DERANGED INSANE / UNHOLY GRAVE – split EP

Simply put, you get total grindcore mayhem from both bands on this EP. DERANGED INSANE who is from Brazil, cranks through four songs of ripping fast grindcore. The low, guttural vocals are great, but when the singer hits those high-pitch screams it seriously sounds like he is trying to dislodge a helium filled lung. On the flip, UNHOLY GRAVE rampage their way through three songs of some of the most blown out and distorted grind I have heard in a while. Intense! (RC)
(Bucho Discos, a/c Alexandre, C.P. 12 Centro, Santo Andre, SP 09015-970, BRAZIL, www.buchodiscos.kit.net)

DICKS – "Hungry Butt" CD

This sucker is divided between two shows 25 years apart, and both are amazing. How many bands of any stripe can keep their vitality that long, especially after being apart for over 20 years? Having Gary Floyd for a vocalist is how—it's almost cheating. Okay, it's a live record, how necessary is it to buy this thing? Well, the DICKS' CD comp on Alternative Tentacles leaves off lots of great songs, and if you want to hear them hot 'n' hunky you'll just have to pull that wallet out of your ass and lay down for this. C'mon you cheap fuck, the DICKS were one of the ten best original American punk bands. Go Google them and let other more pedigreed writers back me up on this. (RW)
(Hotbox, hotboxreview@hotmail.com)

DIRECT CONTROL / STRUNG UP – split LP

This is by far and away the best recording of local faves STRUNG UP. Until now I couldn't totally dig their recorded sound, but I'm all over this. It's still burly old school hardcore but there are some great FREEZE style hooks—catch them live for the real experience. Along with GOVERNMENT WARNING (with whom they share members), DIRECT CONTROL is one of my recent favorite bands, sounding like they could have been lifted straight off the *Mastertape* comp of old; these guys have nailed the ARTICLES OF FAITH/JERRYS KIDS speed+melody combination. Maybe not as immediate as their last record, this is still a ripping release. A split release between No Way and Tank Crimes, two great new-ish DIY hardcore labels, pick this sucker up. (TB)
(Tank Crimes, www.tankcrimes.com)

DON'T WAKE UP / SEASICK – split EP

A couple New Jersey hardcore bands. Throw in some garage-y sounds, guitar solos, and politics, and you've got it. SEASICK starts off with nice fast thrash, but throws in some garage-y punk. The vocals grew on me and I found myself rockin' out by the end of their side. DON'T WAKE UP is a bit faster, chunky hardcore, and pissed. Maybe they sound a bit like LOS CRUDOS. (MH)
(Poker Face, 120 Hamilton Street, New Brunswick, NJ 07203, pokerfacerecords.com)

THE DRAWBACK – "The Brain of the Operation" EP

This New Hampshire punk band sounds like a pedestrian TSOL or ADOLESCENTS. Despite their simple songwriting, they do a pretty damn good job at nailing the early '80s Southern California sound. My only complaint is the overindulgent guitar leads on some of the tracks. This is not bad for a first release. (CC)
(Drawback, 7 Forest Street, Londonberry, NH 03053)

DREADFUL CHILDREN – "Dot to Dot..." CD

A street band that goes for that classic UK punk sound circa the early '80s. A little TOY DOLLS, BRIEFS, and CHELSEA, with strong vocals over some cool riffing guitars. This is a solid full length with some decent production. Good stuff. (RL)
(Street Anthem, www.dreadfulchildren.com)

DRI – "Dirty Rotten" CD

This is the classic and essential thrash album, the *Dirty Rotten LP*, in its original sequence and sound. Merciless, primitive, and assaulting thrash, mind-blowing in its time. "I Don't Need Society," "Money Stinks," and "Balance of Terror" among other tracks, still rock my fucking socks! Sadly, songs like "War Crimes" and "Draft Me" are still particularly relevant, and songs with lyrics like "I stayed at home today, and I'm not going back to work. Money stinks!" still resonate. This whole album shreds; the sound and message are timeless. Excellent. (BS)
(Beer City, www.beercityrecords.com)

EASTER KIDS – "The Good News" EP

Fast, furious punk from Pennsylvania that launches into some great solid blasting hardcore parts; good throaty vocals seething with disenchantment, steeped in personal politics. Good stuff. (BS)
(Brain Drain, Matt Adis, PO Box 25, Furlong, PA 18925, Englito@hotmail.com)

THE ELECTRIC KISSES – LP

Great, co-ed, attitude-drenched power pop from dear ol' soggy bottom Seattle. Kept simple, almost taking on the charm of some old, early '80s English indie band. With abundant energy, catchy little hooks, and great vocals, how could one possibly go wrong? If you like to snuggle up with your six pack and your favorite the KIDS, the BOYS, and NIKKI AND THE CORVETTES records, then I suggest you fire up the credit card and order away. (SD)
(Full Breach Kicks, www.fullbreach77.com)

THE ENDLESS BLOCKADE / WARZONE WOMYN – split LP

I wonder if Raybeez would have beaten these dudes up for snaking the name of his skinbirds' crew? Ahhh, who cares, WARZONE WOMYN start off with a pretty crushing intro and fly into some MIND ERASER-sounding power violence, though at times some of the riffage sounds a little forced. Overall, there are good riffs and good slow parts, so it's all good, bro. THE ENDLESS BLOCKADE does not sound anything like GISM as you may have thought from their name, but is more on the sludgy power violence tip. The one song (!) that these guys bust out on their side of this LP is fucking heavy, almost making you think they exclusive-

ly play crippling doom. The vocals—high-pitched curses of agony—don't even start 'til the last three minutes of the song. This split is great. (NE)
(625 Thrash, www.625thrash.com)

THE FALCON – "Unicornography" CD

Who would have known (well, I'm sure loads of folks did, but whatever) that two of the best bits of the LAWRENCE ARMS and the ALKALINE TRIO used to play together in ska-punkers SLAPSTICK! Anyways, they're back together again, and, fortunately, there's nary a hint of ska. (Well, there is a hint, but even that little taste is real good!) There are, however, lots of hints of the rough yet sweet melodies, hooks, and pop that make the LAWRENCE ARMS and ALKALINE TRIO so wonderful. Eleven songs in just under 30 minutes, and everyone one a winner that could've been that difficult second album that JAWBREAKER should've recorded. Actually, it's better than that, but hopefully you understand what I'm getting at...or at least, you will get at this superb disc. And is it just me, or has Red Scare put out this millennium's best pop-punk records to date...? (RK)
(Red Scare, www.redscare.net)

FALLEN MEN – "4 Track EP" 10"

Now, I'm prone to give a band the benefit of the doubt if they are willing to play slow and let affairs build up to a slow boil, the "fasterish" sugar rush is OK but I wanna keep my teeth, right? All things in moderation or context goes out the window. The challenge, of course, to playing punky stuff slower is your flaws might get emphasized, your ideas will get exposed to more scrutiny, and the personalities of the band members tend to stand out in more stark relief. These guys do a decent job here, the vocals are a workmanlike poetic-talking nightmare-channeling psych session, set to plodding early '80s post-punk throb a la the later Factory Records bands or perhaps the early American indie efforts a la MISSION OF BURMA's 12"ers. Problem is, they don't have enough to say musically to fill up the space they are creating and their churn isn't vicious enough to really suck you in. Not bad at all, but their next record might be something to watch for. (RW)
(Helicopter, no address, too shy-shy)

FALSE ALARM – "Fuck 'Em All, We've All Ready (Now) Won" CD

Yet another in the endless stream of "guest appearance"-saturated discs. FALSE ALARM is clearly channeling the sound and feel of '70s NYC junkie punk here, so it's just a given that they needed Cheetah Chrome and a couple other folks with "cred" of some kind to wank all over the place. Nothing compelling here at all. (MC)
(False Alarm, no address)

THE FEELERS – "Just Can't Get Enough" EP

I thought it would have been really funny if the first track on this EP was a DEPECHE MODE cover. No one in the garage scene would have been expecting that and I personally would have liked to follow each record around the world just to be able to see each person's face as they realized what song it was. That would be fun. Alas, my daydreams never come to fruition. THE FEELERS let loose on this recording. Four full-on, punchy songs in their usual herky-jerky style. The singer sounds like he is constantly trying to catch his breath during every song. Cool. (CK)
(Contaminated, www.contaminatedrecords.com)

FEW AND THE PROUD – "Stampede" CD

Man, my testosterone must be at abnormally high levels or something, cause I'm really digging this CD by Chicago's FEW AND THE PROUD. Modern straight-edge hardcore is not usually my cup of whiskey—in fact, never—but this tramples every other lame "youth crew" band with a fury of brutal riffs, killer breakdowns, and one hell of a negative attitude. Did I just write that? Fuck. Best thing about this is there's almost no metal damage, just pure hardcore aggression (with an emphasis on *hard*). JUDGE for the modern era? (CS)
(Organized Crime, PO Box 213, Brookfield, IL 60513, www.organizedcrimerecords.com)

FIFTH HOUR HERO – "Not Revenge...Just a Vicious Crush" CD

More melodic punk heaven from this Canadian combo. Good guy/gal vocals harmonizing and trading off. The DISCOUNT comparisons must be fading as this almost has a SOUL ASYLUM/HÜSKER DÜ feel due to song structure and tight delivery. Call it pop punk if you want to anyways. Damn those guitars are wailing! This is one of the best bands out there for you melodic folks. (RL)
(No Idea, www.fifthhourhero.com)

FIRE DON'T CARE – "Be What You Are" CD

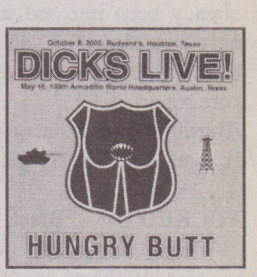
This Arkansas guitar/drums duo succeeds in making a lot of racket for just two people. What I'm hearing is catchy, sing-along indie rock a la SUPERCHUNK or SQUIRREL BAIT, but with off-kilter nods to the MINUTEMEN or later DC post-punk. The quality production belies the scrappy DIY self-released aesthetic of the CD, and I can see this band going on to bigger things. Great stuff. (AM)
($5 ppd: Sam King, PO Box 763, Fayetteville, AR 72702, www.paintingisadinosaur.com)

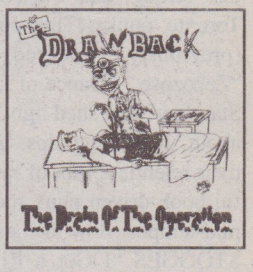
FORNICATORS – "All Punx Are Pirates" CD

Oh Pirate Punk, wee bastard ill-begotten son of the POGUES. The FORNICATORS are lightly garnished with your spirit but you aren't their daddy. I do see the glimmer of Ken Casey in their eyes though. I'd put money on you never finding this little four song EP in it's little card board nappy anywhere in this world outside of the fornicators home port of Uppsala, Sweden. If for some reason you should though, you're in for some fairly adequate street punk that isn't as cookie cutter as a lot of what's floating around in that genre. Not too shabby. I want a pirate anthem next time though. (ST)
(www.fornicators.net)

FOR SCIENCE – "Revenge for Hire" CD

These nerds blast through seventeen songs in under twenty-one minutes. Rough-hewn pop gems, every one of them, with more than a passing nod to early SCREECHING WEASEL, the LARRY BYRRDS, and other such pop punk pioneers. The sequencing has the songs almost





running into each other, which just adds to the wham-bam one-two punch feel of the whole disc. Now if only there were more like this out there... (RK)
(Don Giovanni, www.dongiovannirecords.com)

FUCKED UP – "Black Army" EP

This is a European pressing of the songs "Baiting the Public," "Circling the Drain," and "Municipal Prick." All of these songs have already been released in the US, so I would only pick this up if you're a completist of this band's archetypal, mid-tempo, early-'80s hardcore sound. (CC)
(Burning Sensation, Regulus 25 2221, Mt Katwuk Aan Zee, NETHERLANDS)

FUCKED UP – "Black Cross" EP

With so many folks bending their dicks and tongues into knots over this band, it's probably not much of a surprise that this reviewer also has strong and biased fondness for these Toronto punks. This collection EP, has four (previously released) songs: "Police," "Zezozose," "Dance of Death," and "Last Man Standing" that shed light on what all the buzz is about. It fucking rips, giving a good dose of their relentless mix of raw tone, grit, and tuneful hook-driven punk rock. Some of the faster mid-tempos, flow like a sped up IGGY & THE STOOGES "I Got a Right" with great vocal drive and momentum that invokes energy. To me, this what it's all about, the music that has the hairs on the back of your neck standing up. If you don't have these songs on other formats already, this EP is essential. (BS)
(Burning Sensation, Regulus 25 2221, Mt Katwuk, Aan Zee, NETHERLANDS)

FUCK ME DEAD – "Circling Dead" EP

Good, trashy, thrashy punk rock here. FUCK ME DEAD has a sound that harkens back to being 16, spun as fuck, and drinking beer while listening to fast punk rock through blown out speakers. Nothing mind-blowing but sure a lot of fun. (JF)
(Clarence Thomas, www.bistrodistro.com)

FUCK THE FACTS / SUBCUT– split EP

SUBCUT, from Brazil, does raw, straightahead, bare-bones thrash. Throw in some cheap barked vocals and a not-so-heavy sound and you've heard this 1000 times. FUCK THE FACTS shreds. Unlike their newer material, this is less tech-y and more straightforward grindcore/death metal, and they still aren't shy of melodic metal. These tracks are a bit less complicated but no less heavy, and the vocals, well, they sound like the type of vocals that hurt—scratchy and powerful. The constant double bass drums kept me headbanging. (MH)
(Bucho, C.P. 12, Centro, Santo Andre, SP, 09015-970, BRAZIL, www.buchodiscos.kit.net)

FUN 100 / PAPER LANTERNS – split EP

This split features a pair of '90s-style pop-punk bands from Vancouver, BC. Both bands have catchy melodies and good hooks with zero pretentiousness. The (under)production is great—not slick at all, just full enough to hear all the parts well—and the bands' talent shines through. Fans of quality pop bands like the MR. T EXPERIENCE or THE ERGS! will dig this record. (PC)
(Hockey Dad, 4150 Brant Street, Vancouver, BC V5N 5B4, CANADA)

GANG OF FOUR – "BBC Recordings 1979-1981" LP

Is this essential, considering that all eleven tracks had their official label release? Well, to be a smug cunt, yes. Most contemporary bands would have sold their mothers, if it were legal, to get a BBC session recording. There was and still is something wonderfully basic, sparse, and heavy about the recordings that came out of the famous Maidavale studio. No other band with their arty, herky-jerky, tightly-wound dub sound was more suited to the famous sessions sound than GANG OF FOUR. Yes, this is essential—I myself prefer these recordings to the ones that went onto the glossy covers off their major label releases. Eleven tracks perfectly captured, perfectly preserved, and perfectly packaged. (SD)
(bootleg, no address)

GEWOHNHEITS TRINKLER – "Schöne Musik für Hässliche Menchen" LP

When I first looked at the artwork on this record—a little German skinhead skeleton dude drinking a beer—I immediately thought of Bruce Roehrs. But if Bruce were reviewing this record he'd slam it for being too melodic. I, on the other hand, love this kind of shit. The album starts out sort of unremarkable but towards the end of side one it picks up with some typically catchy Deutsch-punk sing-along fare, although I might not sing along if I knew what they were saying. Skinheads scare me: SHARP, Nazi, traditional, "independent" or otherwise, they're all just a bunch of bald replicants looking for a fight and I'm just the kind of guy they like to target—a smart-ass nerd with weak-ass friends. I'm gonna go write my will now. (PC)
(Scumfuck Tradition, www.scumfuck.de)

GENERATION X – "Your Generation: BBC Sessions 1977-79" LP

.....now this is a really nice sounding bootleg.....!!!!! Fans take notice!!!!!! Great BBC versions of the classic GEN X punk rock anthems.....on cum white vinyl!!!!!!!!!! The cover photo is a HOT full color posed-out pop art publicity shot with the boys at their youngest and sexiest.....chickenhawks will love spilling their loads all over this jacket, that's for sure.....but I think I'll have the first go.....!!!!!! Tony James looks good with my spunk on his face..... (SW)
(bootleg, no address)

GIANT HAYSTACKS – "A Rebirth of Our City" EP

The title track is possibly my favorite HAYSTACKS track to date; smart lyrics and a boatload of hooks. In the sea of punk rock mediocrity, GIANT HAYSTACKS have always stood out from the pack, if only because they sound like no one else. Sure there's elements of the MINUTEMEN, GANG OF FOUR, or the BIG BOYS, but really they just sound like....well, GIANT HAYSTACKS. Clean guitar, off kilter basslines, and Allan's Scots drawl coupled with clever and bleak lyrics that always remind me of a Scottish council estate...only smarter. The recording is a little thinner than the full-lengths', but I really think these are some of their best songs, so they could have recorded them in a bathtub and they would sound good. Hold on while I spin the title track again. Class. (TB)
($4 ppd: Pizza Pizza, c/o Shawn Quinn, 630 Cameo St, Lansing, MI 48911)

GIVE UP ALL HOPE – "Nowhere to Hide from Yourself" EP

It seems that England is having a crust punk revival, which is a welcome change from awful techno. GIVE UP ALL HOPE plays solid heavy crust with hardcore tendencies, some really pounding drums, and wall-of-sound guitar. Good, no doubt. The lyrical concepts deal with the physiology of reality, which is an interesting subject to say the least. A solid EP for the folks who can't get enough of the dirge and doom. One funny note is that I listened to this at 45 rpm and I really liked it, a bit more snotty punk than crust. Buy this record for both 33 and 45 thrills. (WK)
(Never Healed, 8 Thorp Leas, Leigh Rd, Canvey Island, Essex SS8 OBA, UK)

GOBBLINZ – CD

Pub-ish power pop from the UK circa 1977. Two rare singles are on this as well as other studio tracks. Sounds like a Stiff Records band to me but they were on Pinnacle Records. Along the ways of the YACHTS and early ELVIS COSTELLO with keyboards in the mix. This band had its moments. (RL)
(Nat, Shinmei-bld 2f 7-7-33, Nishi-shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160-0023, JAPAN, www.natrecords.com)

GOBBLINZ – "London / Women in Love"

Now I can see why this band's original records would severely dent any countries' gold

reserve. Super catchy and rocking power pop all the way back from the poppy heyday of '78 London. These two tracks keep their punk energy while wallowing in some wonderful mod revival soul, driven along with an eerie organ that wouldn't have sounded out of place on any LOST SOUNDS record. Neat pressing, cool cover, and possibly now affordable to every avid record collector who didn't want to sell their little sister into the white slave trade. (SD)
(Nat, Shinmei-bld 2f 7-7-33, Nishi-shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160-0023, JAPAN, www.natrecords.com)

GOBBLINZ – "Love Me Too" EP

A legit re-issue of the three-song collector-scum gem originally self-released by Peterborough, UK's GOBBLINZ in '78. With this follow-up to the band's "London" single, GOBBLINZ edge even further away from the punk aesthetic in favor of solid songwriting, great vocals and hooks—*totally infectious pussy-power-pop*! Angst and insecurity can't compete. Along with a re-issue of their first single, Nat Records has put together a thirteen track CD of unreleased material. Time to open a beer and embrace our big vaginas! (VH)
(Nat, Shinmei-bld 2f 7-7-33, Nishi-shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160-0023, JAPAN, www.natrecords.com)

THE GONADS – "Old Boots No Panties" CD

First off, boys, you are sorry, sad ol' wankers and you have broken the golden rule of Oi: no hairies in the band. Under no circumstances should a proper Oi band have a sheep dog in its ranks, that's a straight red card. The GONADS were always shit, with not a redeemable quality, and, like a fine wine these lads did not mature with age. A pointless comeback; who would possibly waste their money in this juvenile, humorless crap? Gary Bushell has and always will be a right-wing twat, making his name writing for the working-class-hating (but unfortunately bought by those it despises) rag *The Sun*. Fucking class traitor and Tory ass-licking bastard. (SD)
(Captain Oi, PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP10 8QA, UNITED KINGDOM)

GORGONIZED DORKS / UNHOLY GRAVE – split EP

I'm not a big fan of GORGONIZED DORKS and they sound the same as always—loud, blown-out, bad singing, the whole nine yards. The UNHOLY GRAVE tracks are recorded live, very surprising, in London '03, and sound like UNHOLY GRAVE. (NE)
(DSK, 1723 Park Meadow Dr, Jamestown NY, 14701)

GOVERNMENT WARNING – "No Moderation" LP

After all the Y2K thrash revival bands grew their hair and went rock, there weren't many retro bands of that style ringing my chimes until last couple of years when a bunch of new bands blew up and blew my mind. This band's 7" was possibly my favorite of the bunch and the LP doesn't fail to deliver. Fast? Yes, but with tons of hooks and melody. No faceless thrash here, just classic '80s hardcore not unlike JERRYS KIDS or early GANG GREEN. Best hardcore record of the year. See you in everyone's year end top tens, fellas. (TB)
(Feral Ward, www.feralward.com)

GREX / RABIES – split EP

First side RABIES, which is noise-grind mastered at full volume. High-pitched yells take over most of the recording and the last two songs are ripping powerviolence. Second side GREX, which is a well-produced grind band with death metal undertones that sticks more to the grind side, featuring gruff doom type singing with high, yelling back-ups. (NE)
(ABC Distro, www.csaf.cz)

THE HEADS – "Under the Stress of a Headlong Dive" CD

Long, spazzed-out, psychedelic noise rock jams. They've got lots of knobs and they aren't afraid to twist them. Watch out! There is a pulsating rhythm below that layer of noise. It is my dream collaboration of MONOSHOCK and B.A.L.L. It shouldn't ever happen, but it is nice to know it could. (CK)
(Alternative Tentacles, PO Box 419092, San Francisco, CA 94141, www.alternativetentacles.com)

HELLPETROL – "Can Give You A Hard Time" EP

HELLPETROL plays decent melodic punk 'n' roll with a good dose of the Euro take on the '90s SoCal thing. That being said, I have to give HELLPETROL props for the song "I Can't Surf," even if it does take Germans to capture the frustration of those who grew up in Cali beach communities with the ability to ride the waves. (JF)
(Strictly Commercial, c/o Martin Goeke, Suhlstr. 17, 46117 Oberhausen, GERMANY, www.strictly-commercial.de)

HIT ME BACK – "The Man with Many Faces" 12"

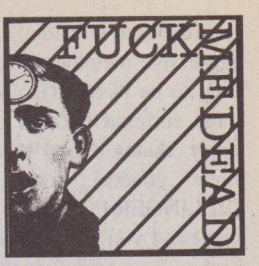
The first two tracks on this four-song one-sided 12" are fucking ragers. They remind me a little of LIFE'S HALT, but have enough personality to stand on their own. The third track—while pretty catchy—contains hand-clapping and a tamborine, which is where things start going downhill for me. The final track has a FLEETWOOD MAC-via-JANE'S ADDICTION intro that will either have you scrambling for the stop button on your turntable, or singing this band's praises as innovators of the melodic thrash movement. Pick this up quick if you are interested, because this Japan-tour-only EP is limited to 200. (CC)
(Cubicle, PO Box 911373, Los Angeles, CA 90091)

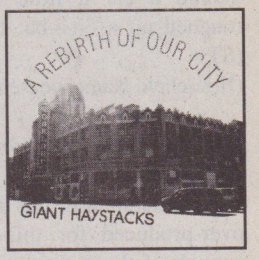
HOPESICK – "Look What You've Done" CD

If this was the late '90s these kids would be in strictly a pop punk band, but since it's 2006 we've just got to add a touch of hardcore and a guy with a "sick ass" scream. This sort of reminds me of GLASSEATER. You've got one mostly pop-punk sounding singer, old screamy pants backing him up, and some "brutal breakdowns" as the kids would call them. Well, kids, I've heard brutal breakdowns, I know brutal breakdowns when I hear them, brutal breakdowns are a friend of mine; HOPESICK, you have no brutal breakdowns. My advice to you is to cut out johnny pop punk and go for the gusto if you're going to try and tussle with this sort of music. (ST)
(SOFLA, www.soflarecords.com)

HOSTAGE LIFE – "Sing for the Enemy" CD

If one were to judge this book by its CD cover, one might think it was a PG. 99 or some like-minded band's





record. What's inside is actually some half d' aggressive melodic punk from some cats who used to be in MARILYNS VITAMINS, who I think suffered because of their crappy name. Sorry, dudes. Good band though. It's in the same general family, but this is not DILLINGER FOUR part 2. Meaning if you like that band you'll most likely find something in here to love and a touch of electric boogaloo. They need to take the production and drag it behind a car a little though—it could be roughed up a bit—but that's just nit-picking. (ST)
(Household Name, householdnamerecords.co.uk)

HOT RAILS – "Psychotic Features/Shakes of Misery"

Predictable '50s/'60s inspired rock 'n' roll—over-produced for this genre and just not enough of those memorable moments I crave from my rock 'n' roll. A rare miss from Super Secret (SD)
(Super Secret, PO Box 1585, Austin, TX 78767, www.supersecretrecords.com)

IMAGINARY ICONS – "Eye-cons / Fade"

A pretty authentic slice of 1978 KBD art-pop. Guitars chime, drums roll, and disaffected vocals half-heartedly deliver some pretty catchy harmonies. On the flip, the wave dial is cranked up via some Eno-damaged synth and a snotty/catchy refrain. Suitably blank, and worth tracking down. (AM)
(Daggerman, daggermanrec@yahoo.com)

THEE IRMA & LOUISE – "Roswell Beach Nightmare" 10"

Straight-up surf instrumentals from Bern, Switzerland. I guess in Bern you'd be surfing Lake Neuchâtel. How are the waves there? THEE IRMA & LOUISE add more distortion than reverb for a harder surf sound. (CK)
(Madame Irma Louise, Quartierhof 4, 3013 Bern, SWITZERLAND, irmalou@web.de)

IRON CAGE – "We Turn Our Heads" CD

Blasting out ten songs in sixteen minutes, The Netherlands' IRON CAGE does its best to carry on the torch of chaotic emo-hardcore... Definitely harsh and intense, but as far as the genre goes, pretty straightforward as they manage to steer clear of the whining, dramatic breakdowns and sappy guitar leads. There's more than a hint of metal, which I can always do without, but not much time wasted masturbating. Like I said, ten songs in sixteen minutes... (VH)
(Break Some)

ITALIAN STALLION – "The Collapze" EP

This is some shredding, super fast hardcore from Germany. There are a few tempo breaks, but this is pretty much all go/no slow! These aggressive tunes remind me so much of TEAR IT UP it is ridiculous. But I am into this style, so it gets nothing but aces from me. They even do a GO! cover, for those that are counting. (RC)
(Markus Rauschen, Klinkumer Str. 5, D-41844 Wegberg, GERMANY, theitalianstallion.de)

JESUS & THE DEVIL – "Let Them Have It" CD

Initial impression: sounds pretty good. The drums are insistent, the guitars are buzzy and busy, the vocals are down low and near the ground, as they should be. "Are You Ready," they ask, and I reply, "Yes, indeed!" There's a lot happening here, expressed in few notes. "Do It for the Queen" leaves plenty to the imagination; "Beautiful" is at least easy on the eyes; "Punk Rock Song" is only marginally that. JESUS & THE DEVIL wobble on the verge of mainstream-y rock *and* sound okay within that context—no doubt they'll soon drop their indie cred like last month's *National Geographic* and move on to greener and grassier pastures. Let them have it. (JH)
(Fudge Sickill, PO Box 7052, Vista Park, IL 60181, www.fudgesickillrecords.com)

JESUS FUCKING CHRIST – "Cold Day in Hell" LP

The band features Dave Ed from NEUROSIS but it's not slow or doomy; sometimes it reminds me of THE ACCÜSED with a more dark and moody sound, sometimes it's just thrashy. The drumming sounds really light and the bass should be pumped up a little more in the mix, but other than that this band has been playing around in the Bay a shitload so if you have the chance you should peep this shit. By the way, the art on this rips, dudes. (NE)
(Inimical, PO Box 2803, Seattle, WA 98111, www.inimical.com)

JESUS FUCKING CHRIST – "Cold Day in Hell" CD

Larry of RICKETS and DEADLY WEAPONS fame is back with a new band, sounding darker and more powerful than I ever expected. Back to hardcore here folks, obviously influenced by POISON IDEA and other Pacific Northwest '80s bands. Good stuff. (MC)
(Puke, P.O. Box 99456, Emeryville, CA 94662, www.pukerecords.com)

THE JONESES – "Tits and Champagne" 12"

I was never a big fan of THE JONESES back in the day. They were raw, but they were a bit too "rock 'n' roll" for me. They were like the REPLACEMENTS, but even a little more rock 'n' roll-y. Back then, for me, if it was rock 'n' roll it was shit. I wanted the punk rock, man. I had a girlfriend that liked them, but they never did it for me. I'm here to tell you that I was on the late train on this one. You see, most rock 'n' roll back then was total crap. (Hell, most rock 'n' roll today is crap.) But I made the mistake of thinking that *all* rock 'n' roll was crap. Just like most things, rock 'n' roll can be crappy, but it isn't crappy by definition. (Some things remain inherently crappy, but rock 'n' roll isn't one of them.) Likewise, just because something is "punk" doesn't necessarily mean that it is good. This is rock 'n' roll, no doubt. But it's also raw and evil and in your face and the devil is definitely behind it. Wait a second, is this punk? (KK)
(Full Breach Kicks, www.fullbreach77.com)

KEVIN K – "Rock 'n' Roll Dynamite" CD

At this rate KEVIN K is gonna outlast us all. Sleazy Johnny Thunders-y rock 'n' roll? Yes. Original? Not really. Better than the new NEW YORK DOLLS record? You betcha. (JH)
(Full Breach Kicks, www.fullbreach77.com)

LOS KIKES – "Baltika" CD

Punk that's all over the place from Israel. Although there are flirtations with hardcore and psych, the predominant vibe is lo-fi garage punk, screamed and tortured. It's all too jumbled to make any real sense of, but there is a great deal of promise here. I'd gladly trade the filler that makes up 50% of this CD for a couple top-notch 7"s. (MC)
(Sshaking, www.sshakingrecordss.com)

THE KILL DECIBEL – "My Final War" EP

Heavy hardcore that has the chunky NYHC toughguy sound. Similar to bands like SWORN ENEMY or HATEBREAD, the lyrics say a lot of nothing, 'cept they are angry. At who/what? Who knows…just angry, damn it! Breakdowns, gang vocals, everything is black on the artwork, and a few "I will drag you down" lines...yawn. (MH)
(Specimen 32, c/o Tim Drew: 6 Confederation Drive, St. Thomas, ON N5P 3N9, CANADA, www.specimen32.com)

THE KIND OF JAZZ MUSIC THAT KILLS / QUEST FOR FIRE – split EP

Schlock and raunch with a lot of heart and soul from TKOMTK, the kind of gritty damaged punk sound that Wisconsin is world famous for, after pilsner and cheese. Violin, sax, and Keyboard ads to their unique sound, parts remind me of FALSE SACRIMENT. The QUEST FOR FIRE plays more driving fast paced punk that dives into brief classic / stoner rock and prog inspired jams. With both bands the recordings are low-fi and gritty, and the musicianship right on. (BS)
(myspace.com/questforfire, myspace.com/thekindofjazzmusicthatkills)

KSK / STERBEHILFE – "Really Loud and Awesome Fast" EP

STERBEHILFE is how they say in Germany, "Awesome fast." I guess that means the singer has to sing awesome fast also, almost to an annoying point. I'm going to guess that being "really loud" in this case means playing grind with ska parts. KSK has the most annoying snare in the goddamned world. They play grind, that's it. Grind. (NE)
(Die Krachmanufaktur, das_monster@gmx.de)

KURT – "RMXD" 12"

I remember hearing KURT a long time ago and being neither here nor there on them. BORN AGAINST-minded Germans flogging that old horse. Time has passed and that KURT caterpillar has become a fucked-up butterfly light years ahead of its former self. There are two songs on the A-side from their split with the POPULAR SHAPES (apparently with better sound quality) and four remixes on the B-side that are unbelievable. I've never heard the originals and I imagine I'm the better for it since I have to review these versions. BamBam Babylon Bajasch and Endo twist, distort and dub their way through these with the very rare ability to make remixes worth listening to. I would seriously listen to a whole album worth of collaborations between KURT and these guys. Make it happen X-Mist. (ST)
(X-Mist, PO Box 1545, 72195 Nagold, GERMANY, www.x-mist.de)

LATTERMAN – "...We Are Still Alive" CD

This is the third full-length from these New Yorkers. I love this band's energy and spirit. As a whole they remind me of DILLINGER FOUR without the nudity. No major changes sonically, just another batch of catchy, melodic punk songs that go by way too fast. It's good to see prolific output from a band that is clicking. LATTERMAN is a great band! (RL)
(Deep Elm, www.deepelm.com)

LEFT JAB – "Hate O' Clock" EP

Get the fuck out of the way! LEFT JAB is bringing the hardcore attack straight from Hamburg, Germany to your turntable! These gruff-throated guitar-pounding ruffians bring a truckload of ill will to you little dribble-dicks. Side A starts with the title cut, "Hate O' Clock," which is sung in English and spews venom all about the place. This first-rate slow-to-fast hardcore frames strong lyrics: "Don't waste my time with your fucking views / Stand up and watch the clock and you will see how late it really is." Song two on Side A is in German—odds are it is not a warm and positive message. Song one on Side B is about the police. In "I Want You Dead," LEFT JAB sings: "You're needless...You're fucked up...You are a brainless puppet of the fucking state...I want you dead!" Fuck yes! Song two on Side B is the only number that isn't a skull-krusher. "Altona Torkelgang" is a "throwaway" pop song on an otherwise extremely hard-nosed thug-punk winner! This record is well worth the price of admission for the first three songs! (BR)
(Bolzkow, Lobusgh 37-39, D-22765 Hamburg, GERMANY, leftjab.de)

LIVE FAST DIE / VCR – split EP

LIVE FAST DIE shake things up with some dirty Neanderthal rock 'n' roll on "Bang It's War," then follow it up with the lo-fi pop sensibility of "Lovedogs in Space." Unbelievably dumb and unbelievably catchy with a nice, simple guitar hook and an exceedingly repetitive chorus that brings to mind ROKY ERICKSON's "I Walked With a Zombie." VCR, on the flip, follow it up with two of their own lazy, strung-out pop tunes for the disabled. The term "garage-rock" seems to be thrown around a little too liberally these days, but whatever the case, I imagine more than a few BLACK LIPS fans will be poppin' boners over this one. (VH)
(Daggerman, no address)

LOAFASS – "Oboy" CD

If you use the phrases "middle of the road," "lowest common denominator," and/or "occasional funk parts" to describe your musical preferences, then maybe you should check out this band called LOAFASS, they're on "Buttbread Records." (CS)
(Buttbread, no address)

LOSER LIFE – "Things Will Never Change / It's All Over"

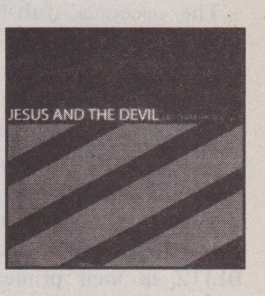
Melodic hardcore is a much-maligned genre—often for good reason—but this 7" by Bakersfield's LOSER LIFE is at least a step in the right direction. The melancholy guitar lines and plaintive vocals are there, but they are backed up by some driving music, and the rough production gives this a bit of an edge, too. Not bad—and hopefully with some improvement, the next record will really be something to check out. (A word of advice for that next one, though: ditch the lines like "Can't keep quiet / My heart is about to riot.") (CS)
(Going Underground, 1822 G Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301)

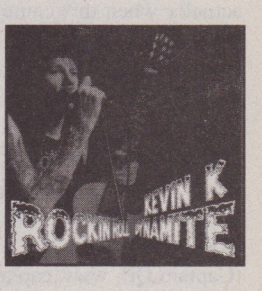
LOUSY BREAK – "No Reason" EP

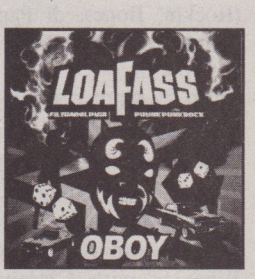
The new LOUSY BREAK EP on Headache Records presents some good barroom rock for you skins and punks. These tunes just beg for a pint and a couple of your ne'er-do-well friends as cohorts. We start off with the rock-solid "No Reason," then pick it up a notch with the sing-along barnburner, "Crappily Ever After." Flip this little bitch over and you get "I Like Cat," which doesn't quite carry the rock 'n' roll momentum that "Crappily Ever After" initiated. But don't worry! The last tune, "NJ State Song," rocks your liver. This is a drinking band, best appreciated under sudden conditions. (BR)
(Headache, PO Box 204, Midland Park, NJ 07434, www.headacherecords.com)

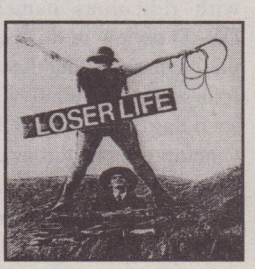
LOVE SONGS – "Behind Enemy Lines in G# Minor" CD

The latest from Craigums and crew, and a chance to hear what the world's #6 air guitarist sounds like plugged in. This album is actually a rock opera telling the story of the protagonists' hooking up with (and eventual separation from) a Mormon single mom. As is often the case with this sort of thing, the music can take some unexpected twists and turns in order to fit itself round the words that are









telling the story, but for the most part, LOVE SONGS make it work. Their signature prog-metal-math-pop-punk seems especially suited to this kind of project. This is a pretty ambitious undertaking, and they've pulled it off with aplomb. (AM)
(NewDisorder, www.thelovesongs.com)

MAJOR ACCIDENT – "A Clockwork Legion" CD

The second full-length from these Clockwork Orange-sporting lads from the north of England. This originally came out in the early '80s and, like later records by their contemporaries the PARTISANS and CHRON-GEN, is chock full of the kind of guitar-heavy power-pop anthems that these days would be considered pop-punk. They managed to mix up the melody, power, and menace much like BLITZ in their prime. And this really is MAJOR ACCIDENT at their best (though actually when this came out, they had shorted their name to ACCIDENT for some reason, though it doesn't say that here). Like all the Captain Oi! reissues, this comes loaded with the singles and B-sides that came out in the era of this album's release, plus some useful liner notes, lyrics, and artwork. A rather fine classic exhumed for your edification and enjoyment. (RK)
(Captain Oi!, www.captainoi.com)

MALAKAS – "Too Good to Be True/Sorry 'Bout My Drinkin" 2xLP

A compilation of two previously released LPs and some previously unreleased Cranford Nix tracks, all put together to honor the late vocalist/lead guitarist. This is rock'n'roll with some serious punk rock and some serious country influences. Reading the lyrics and hearing the story of how he died, it's not difficult to connect the two. It's a great record, but it really is too bad. (KK)
(Rockin' Bones, di Pagani Gualtiero, Borgo Palmia 3A, 43100 Parma, ITALY)

MARGARET THRASHER – "Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret Thrasher" EP

Whoever thought that this band name was "funny" is wrong. Extremely, painfully wrong. Seriously, the name of this band almost warrants a bad review in and of itself. What is with Clarence Thomas Records releasing awesome punk records by bands with ridiculous names? (See FUCK ME DEAD review in this issue for another example.) On the other hand, the music on this four-song EP is totally great, timeless, classic-sounding punk rock that had me and Martin dancing around the kitchen when the record first came into MRR HQ. Three Canadian ladies and one dude play some aggressive (but not aggro) hardcore/punk that hearkens back to yesteryear without sounding retro. Juls' vocals are emphatic and raw, but her rage is nicely complemented by hooks galore. It's hard to pin down one reference point for this excellent band—they have hardcore energy and anger with the melodic punk tendencies of bands like FINAL SOLUTIONS and CAR-BONAS. So, imagine if you will a faster FINAL SOLUTIONS with thrashier guitar parts and incendiary female vocals. How could you go wrong? If Layla and Bruce Roehrs both like a record, you know you are in for a winner. Bonus points for the killer anti-retro fad and radical feminist lyrics. (GN)
(Clarence Thomas, www.bistrodistro.com)

MASS GRAVE / PRETTY LITTLE FLOWER – split EP

MASS GRAVE comes back with more killer crusty grind, solid sounding and headbanging all around. PRETTY LITTLE FLOWER takes the cake though—non-stop grind attack, song after song ripping yer ass apart. This split is fucking great and it's a 7" gatefold; somehow they got each side of the record to be a different color combo. (NE)
(Endless Sprawl, #106-1450 East 7th Ave., Vancouver, BC V5N 1R8, CANADA)

MERGE LEFT – "Divided Nation" CD

This teenaged Midwest trio delivers a rather fine little disc. Well, I guess all CDs are little discs, but this debut is brimming with suitably fiery lefty lyrical concerns married to a driving, melodic SoCal sound. In attitude, music, and politics, it bears more than a passing resemblance to the first BAD RELIGION LP, and that can only be a good thing, right!? (RK)
(www.myspace.com/mergeleftpunkrock)

THEE MIDNITERS – "In Thee Midnite Hour!" CD

Were THEE MIDNITERS the first band to add an extra E to the article? Coulda been. Authentic East LA garage from a bunch of teen delinquents—utterly unheard by most, recorded in the '64-'67 era and preserved in vats of brine under Miriam Linna's floorboards. Features lots of standards ("Gloria," "Devil with a Blue Dress," "Money," "Land of a Thousand Dances") with some spirited originals ("Whittier Boulevard," "Jump, Jive and Harmonize"), all infused with that ruddy-cheeked mid-'60s spunk. Thanks to Norton Recs for the exhaustive liner notes and studiously-researched booklet that leaves no stone unturned. (JH)
(Norton, Box 646, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10276, www.nortonrecords.com)

MINDLESS MUTANT – "Without" EP

I'm not especially fond of "sound-alike" bands, but I'll gladly make an exception for this killer EP of INFEST/CROSSED OUT worship. Alternating between furious blasts of aggro and sickly catchy slower parts, this is perfectly—and I mean *perfectly*—executed from beginning to end. Over-the-top vocals, stark artwork…and the most important part: good songwriting. There is even the obligatory stoner instrumental (not one, but two!)—only thing missing is the horror movie sample at the end. Highly recommended. (CS)
(625/Dangerously Small, 3532 Pinehuron, Plano, TX 75075)

MISS 45 – CD

This band goes for a rock 'n' roll feel. The JOHNNY THUNDERS influence is obvious as well as a ROLLING STONES groove at times. The rootsy STONES attempts come across as a bit soul-less. Still for five songs, this is alright punky rock and roll. Stick to the up-tempo stuff, boys. File under potential. (RL)
(No Talent, www.miss45.com)

MONUMENTS TO RUINS – "Under the Guise of Progress...the Rise of Decent" 12"

This is a posthumous release from Florida's MONUMENTS TO RUINS who also released an EP on Tribal War Records some years ago. This four-song 12" was recorded in 2004. It's overtly political, harsh, soul-crushing crust with melodic guitar parts at certain points and also some good faster anthemic peace punk rhythms. I especially like the female and male vocal tradeoffs; both compliment each other well. Reminds me of CATHARSIS as much as a band like REACT or AOS. The only thing that kind of dates this to a certain time is the slight overuse of acoustic guitar interludes, but I can get past that because they don't sound like a TRAGEDY copy. Good recording, good layout. (WK)
(Catchphraze, PO Box 41356 Phoenix, AZ 85080, www.catchphrazerecords.com)

MOTHER NIGHT – "Slight of Hand" EP

This band is like a kid walking on a railroad track. Every now and again he stumbles on the right side of the tracks and at times he skins his knee on the wrong side. This is driving hardcore that is sometimes held back by its vocalist and his lyrics and at others pushed forward by them. They're also treading some pretty well-worn genre ground and not providing a whole lot of surprises. Yet every time I want to write this band off something comes in and snatches them back up and makes me want to listen to it again. They do score points by being named after a Kurt Vonnegut book with one of my favorite quotes. "We are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful about what we pretend to be." (ST)
(www.mothernight.net)

NAMES FOR GRAVES – "Worst Kid Ever" EP

Straight edge youth crew hardcore outta Cleveland. This stuff looks like it was recorded over a year and a half ago. Competently played, good production, a bit of overuse of the word "fucking" in the song "The Movement (Searching for Ray Cappo)" ("nothing's fucking changed," "deaf fucking ears," "a positive fucking outlook," "the human fucking spirit," and so on—no, it doesn't make the music more "intense," it just sounds silly). Unfortunately there is nothing to distinguish this one from the other youth crew records that seem to find their way to me month after month. (CS)
(Specimen 32, 27 Beaconsfield Ave, London, Ontario N6C 1B6, CANADA, www.spec32.com)

NECKTIES MAKE ME NERVOUS – "Apparently the Khmer Rouge Are Killing Quite a Lot of People in Portland" EP

The punchline to the title track is "...and the punks put the pictures on the record sleeves." It's a brilliantly realized attack on the appropriation of (mostly third world) violence and suffering by punks who mostly pair up the stolen graphics with a half-assed "fuck war" song. NECKTIES MAKE ME NERVOUS plays fast, snotty, pissed-off punk rock with smart lyrics that lean towards healthy criticism of problems within the punk scene. Sound-wise they are fairly one-dimensional—it feels like the singer is just over your shoulder screaming in your ear the whole time the record is playing. Still, this is a good record all around. It comes with lots of goodies like stickers and posters, and apparently even a CD for the turntable-deprived. (AM)
(GC, PO Box 3806, Fullerton, CA 92834, www.gcrecords.com)

NO FUCKER – "Maelstrom" EP

See this is what I am talking about—no fucking originality at all. DISCLOSE has done this record 45 times already; it's old. For the last time (I hope), DISCHARGE was not a one-dimensional band. Why does everyone who dabbles with the d-beat have to copy all the most boring repetitious parts? I want to ask what the songs "Decontrol" and "Never Again" have in common? Sure, they were done by a band that won't be forgotten in three years, but also they didn't sound like the same song. Every other d-beat band wants to copy the same song structure over and over again in every song. Punk is not supposed to be cookie cutter copies of other bands. I thought it was supposed to be individualism and self-expression—guess not. (WK)
(No Real Music, 1104 Hart Street, Utica, NY 13502)

EL NUDO – "Rudo del el Nudo" EP

Let me get this straight—a Japanese fastcore band that has a fascination with Mexican wrestling? I use to think I'd never get enough of straight-ahead, no discernable songs, tons of tracks per 7", fast Japanese hardcore, but maybe I just did get enough. I doubt I'll listen to this again. (MH)
(DSK, www.myspace.com/dskrecords)

NUMBERS ON NAPKINS – CD

Blech! NOFX-influenced bar rock with bad singing and dumb lyrics. They wrote a song called "Another Song That Maximum Rock n' Roll Won't Like," which is an apt title, but I think their intention was to offend us with the use of the word "faggot" or something. The real reason "Maximum Rock n' Roll" doesn't like it is because it's a bad song, as are the rest of them—especially when they try to get all serious with their alt-rock love ballad, "Precious Cargo," which is cleverly followed up by "My Girlfriend Bit My Dick Off." I wonder why. (PC)
(Bad Stain, www.badstainrecords.com)

ORDER / ULTRA DOLPHINS – split EP

I don't know why, but I expected ULTRA DOLPHINS to be some sort of REPLACEMENTS rock re-invention. That is not true. What it is, is some complex shit. Brutal riffs that ride that line somewhere between hardcore and mind-altering soul-crushing rock and roll. I imagine live they would freak you the fuck out. ORDER on the flipside is some out there shit. Three songs of some sort of frantic post-modern spastic take on the ZOMBIES. I could also say it's a little like later-period THE ANNIVERSARY if they brought meth to the party instead of hash. Shit, it sounds like I brought meth to this review party. (ST)
(Blood of the Drash, www.bloodofthedrash.org)

ORDER – "Kickball" EP

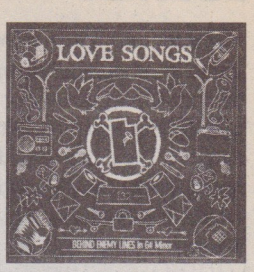
Some horrible suburban art punk/acoustic jam-outs from a band that apparently existed for six years then broke up after they released this. I have no idea what to say about this at all. It sounds like some horrible dorm band from a collection of tired out college radio DJs who only ever played for their girlfriends at lame indie bars on campus. (LG)
(no address)

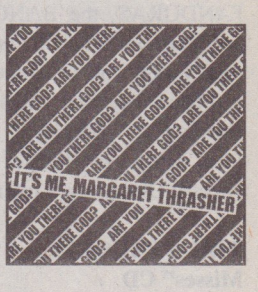
ORDER OF THE WHITE ROSE – "War Machine" CD

Wow, Hawaiian hardcore! This band rocks some scorching political hardcore with basic but succinct tunes and lyrics. "WHITE ROSE" sounds best on tracks like "In Control" and "Exposed," where they ditch the tried-and-true anthemic hardcore and go for a more darkly tuneful sound, but the straightforward stuff works well too. We hope to see this band come to the continent someday… (PC)
($12 ppd: Unitree, PO Box 880908, Pukalani, HI 96788, brokelegdog@hotmail.com)

PARTYLINE – "Zombie Terrorist" CD

Allison Wolfe's latest band is probably more COLD COLD HEARTS than BRATMOBILE... It's just her voice, a guitar, and drums, the sound of a primal punk rock dance party that all her bands are. I don't mean this in a dismissive way at all by the way, but really PARTYLINE just sounds like every Allison Wolfe band minus the genius and destructive Erin Smith guitar stylings. Her voice is so distinctive and is truly in the pantheon of legendary girl punk vocalists. I *love* the GOVERNMENT ISSUE cover, of the song "Partyline," obviously. It makes me think of someone's little sister breaking into their dude practice space and re-writing hardcore for the slumber party set. I think this is probably the best thing she's done since the COLD COLD HEARTS. I liked certain songs totally and completely from the BRATMOBILE reunion LPs but the entire LPs were kind of hard going listening





somehow and not as effortless snotty genius as the *Real Janelle* or *Pottymouth*. Anyway, this is pretty fucking great; her voice is less piercing and strident somehow but still totally distinctive and rad. The guitar sound is kind of more traditional punk sounding than Erin Smith style, which is cool in this one way to hear Allison in another context and not the chopped up Erin style new wave surf guitar. This reminds me of old K Records stuff and the FLATMATES, the PANDORAS, the BANGS (the LA BANGS, not Olympia BANGS) and old GO-GO'S. It's totally punk and awesome in that early-'80s LA girl band way. The lyrics are political and gossipy in true Wolfe style, and this is great basement dance party music. (LG)
(Retard Disco, www.retardisco.com)

THE PEACOCKS – "Greatest Hits and Misses" CD

Apparently this Swiss trio has been doing it for 15 years now. Long enough, and with enough records, I guess, to be worthy of a greatest hits collection of sorts. This is a collection of their best songs plus three unreleased efforts, though it's all new to me. What you do get is some sweet surfy pop-punk played by dapper foreigners in suits, slicked-back hair, a stand-up bass, and semi-acoustic electric guitar. I guess 'cos of the hair grease and stand-up bass, they've been pegged as rockabilly, or punkabillly. But to these virgin ears, they sound pretty straightforward (i.e., rather excellent) melodic punk in the vein of SCREECHING WEASEL, QUEERS, et al. Bit snotty, and definitely with a stand-up bass. Mebbe it's just that Mass Giorgini seems to have engineered and produced most of these great hits. Anyways, fans of this stuff will dig it. Not sure that the psychobillys will, but that's their loss... (RK)
(Hairball8, www.hairball8.com)

THE PETS – "Baby It's You / No Pets Allowed"

.....ah, THE PETS.....by far these guys are one of the better Bar Area bands and it's a pleasure to be reviewing one of their singles.....!!!!! First off, I wanna give 'em two dicks up for the brilliant sleeve art on this here single, but I won't tell you readers what it is because you don't deserve to know!!!!!!! Live these guys sound real poppy but here on vinyl it comes off more like lo-fi punk/garage or something along those lines.....!!!!! The vocalist is not afraid to sound like a fucking weirdo and that always wins my heart!!!!! Both songs are short and played at a nice mid-tempo so you can really hear their hooks come through.....fucking fantastic!!!!!!!!!! C'mon girls, let's turn these boys into egomaniacs!!!!!!! (SW)
(Raw Deluxe, PO Box 23882, Oakland, CA 94623, www.theerawdeluxe.com)

PISSCHRIST – "Nothing Has Changed" LP

PISSCHRIST is a fucking raw punk juggernaut; perfectly executed D-beat in the tradition of MOB 47, ANTI-CIMEX, SKITLICKERS, and—dare I say it—DISCHANGE, all done with some form of originality that I thought had run out in this style. I actually would compare them to a band like FRAMTID because they play Scandi-core but with hooks and structure. I had the pleasure of seeing them three times this summer and they are fucking amazing live; they blew people's minds. It might just be the booze talking but I have to say that if you don't go to see this band when they are in Ami-land next spring you might miss the best raw punk show since GAUZE played Gilman Street in the mid-'90s. Australia lost the croc hunter this month—oh boo hoo—but who the fuck cares when you have bands like PISSCHRIST filling the void? (WK)
(Yellow Dog, PO Box 550208, Berlin 10372, GERMANY, www.yellowdog.de)

POINTING FINGER – "Milestone" CD

While not as good as their stellar *Transcend* EP, this Portuguese band still brings the goods on this 12-song full length of ripping straight edge hardcore. There isn't another band in Europe that can pull off a healthy mix of modern youth crew and traditional hardcore punk, and still keep my interest. Good band. (CC)
(Goodwill, www.goodwillrecords.net)

PRICKS / SPROUTS – split EP

Split 7" on a hit 'n' miss Italian label. The PRICKS play boomy, speedy hardcore with some punky-ness but no real standout character. It just feels tossed off, and not in a good way. The other side is possessed by the mighty SPROUTS of Japan, and although I'm no Japan-o-phile I can't deny that this country usually processes our rock in interesting and exciting ways. These guys, if you didn't catch their EP on Sound Pollution from a couple of years back, play a style of breakneck hardcore that channels the early '80s without any of the cloying wink 'n' nod visual cues that dog many American efforts to catch that elusive "Freedom Summer 1982" feelin'. Very much in the vein of fellow countrymen the JELLYROLL ROCKHEADS, although these guys apparently dress more like the REGISTRATORS. Buy it for the good side, and then it's time to "FAITH" (of FAITH/VOID split 12" fame) the opposite side with the ol' screwdriver... (RW)
(Rockin' Bones, Borgo Palmia 3a, 43100 Parma, ITALY)

PROTESTANT – "Make Peace with the Rope You Hang From" LP

Harsh and dark fast-paced crust influenced punk, with throaty vocals, mixed with metal hardcore sounding intros and bridges, and some stoney breakdowns. Well-played and conceived tunes, PROTESTANT has structures and riffs that remind me of a crustier CONVERGE, not my thing, but they do it well. (BS)
(Fuck Life, ilovepunkrock666@yahoo.com, 17 mountain Laurel Way, Azusa, CA 91702)

PSA – "Sulla Nostra Pelle" LP

Evidently, this is the first demo by this ultra-obscure Italian hardcore band, whose name, incidentally, stands for "Punk Sounds Against." Recorded in 1982, this gets a big "for completists only" stamp from me. Unlike the utterly essential INFEZIONE demo, which was pressed to vinyl for the first time by Agipunk a few years back, PSA could probably have stood to be a footnote in Italian hardcore history rather than a band with readily consumable vinyl. Now, don't get me wrong, I am a huge fan of early '80s Italian hardcore. Bands like WRETCHED and DECLINO had some of the most demented vocals, frantic drumming, and mind-blowing guitar parts of any bands in the world, ever. Not so PSA. Their vocalist does his part, and is by far the most interesting aspect of this release. The rest of the band, however, rarely keeps up—the singer is there, screaming away while the guitars are barely audible, the bass parts are all over the place, and the songs rarely get off the ground. The recording is primitive as all hell, but in a obscuring, muddy way rather than a raw or energetic way. There are a couple of ragers, but is that really enough to warrant a full LP reissue? (GN)
(Rockin' Bones, Borgo Palmia 3a, 43100 Parma, ITALY, www.rockinbones.it)

RADIO DAYS – CD

These Italian boys crank out some decent pop punk in the SCREECHING WEASEL and TRAVOLTAS veins. Twelve catchy tunes with decent vocals and guitar lines galore. Now that the great TRAVOLTAS are no more, this band could ease the pain at least for a while. (RL)
(Goodwill, www.radiodays.it)

RATOS DE PORÃO – "Homen Inimigo do Homen" CD

RATOS DE PORÃO, the highly influential '80s punk legends from Brazil, continue on their post-punk metal path; for me the driving and more straightforward tracks go down easier. "Pedofilia Santa" and "Expresso da Escravidao" are the standouts on this disc, while other tracks with wanky guitar leads and nu metal breakdowns, are a bit too mainstream metal sounding for me. Still, they show signs that they can still kick out the jams, and there are probably enough traces of underground punk influence throughout the record to keep diehards listening. (BS)
(Beat Generation, Apdo. 18107, 28080 Madrid, SPAIN, munster@munster-records.com)

RAT TRAPS – "Complications" EP

Three songs jammed onto one side of a 45 rpm 7" record. This doesn't sound like any other RAT TRAPS records I have. This can't be the same band. Or can it? Below all the noise, I hear it—the REATARDS-esque vocals. This will take many listens to completely appreciate. But I'm ready to take it on. I am all for lots of noise and I wouldn't expect anything less than this noise fest from Ken Rock. (CK)
(Ken Rock, www.ken-rock.com)

RED – "Golden Oath of Allegiance" CD

Fuckkkkkk, this shit is insane!!!! RED plays classic grind; it's fast as shit with deep-ass cookie monster vox, blown-out production, and an overload of distorted *everything!* Endless riffs destroy my eardrums, going between the classic headbanging back-and-forth beats and unrelenting blast-beats—this shit *killllz*. The layout is an overblown photo collage of greatness and has tons of pictures of these dudes slaying it live. Buy or cry, grind Osaka. (NE)
(Stickfigure, www.stickfiguredistro.com)

THE REDDMEN – "Arsenic Ballads" CD

Power pop here featuring a band going for that 1979 LA sound. Think 20/20, PLIMSOULS, and today's TSAR. A decent disc from this ten-year-old band on their second full-length. (RL)
(Not Bad, www.notbadrecords.com)

REGRET – "Misery Brigade" CD

REGRET plays a very plodding, mid-tempo, metallic hardcore with a vocalist that reminds me a lot of the singer for UNBROKEN. Like most modern hardcore bands of today, the Boston sound is inescapable, but for the most part this has a mid-'90s feel that I can really get behind. If you're a fan of UNBROKEN, or maybe even THREADBARE, then I would recommend REGRET. (CC)
(Organized Crime, www.organizedcrimerecords.com)

RETSEPTI – "1987-92" CD

RETSEPTI was one of the small number of punk/alternative bands to exist in the Soviet Republic of Georgia in the late '80s/early '90s. This nicely assembled official CD retrospective collects their entire recorded history and includes a booklet with lyrics and a recent interview (both translated into English). RETSEPTI's music was, for the most part, dark with gothic and post-punk influences. The material on this CD comes from two different periods—the earlier stuff, six songs recorded in mid-'89, is raw, with almost an industrial post-punk feel, marked by harsh vocals. The later tracks, four from late 1990, are less abrasive and definitely further from punk. The recording quality is surprisingly high throughout. Influences range everywhere from the STOOGES to JOY DIVISION to KILLING JOKE, though RETSEPTI really doesn't sound like anything in particular I've ever heard—except one track, a straight and rather embarrassing CURE rip-off, that sticks out like a sore thumb. Overall this CD is a bit uneven, and it took me a few listens to get accustomed to some of the more melodramatic elements, but there are several really good tracks on here. There's a dark, desperate feel, interesting guitar work—and what a twisted vocalist! I must admit I have a particular fondness for and interest in Eastern European punk from the '80s, and anyone with similar tastes and an open mind should check this out. (CS)
(Supreme Echo, 2185 Amity Drive, Sidney, BC, V8L 1B2, CANADA)

REZUREX – "Beyond the Grave" CD

I hate to be *that* guy, but all this psychobilly shit sounds the same to me. The vocals are total DANZIG…I had to check it wasn't him singing! Musically it's that standup bass, twangy guitar rockabilly shit that I just can't dig. If this is your thang, then this band have a bunch of movers and shakers involved (ex-TIGER ARMY and NEKROMANTIX). Me? I think it sucks. (TB)
(Fiend Force, www.fiendforce.com)

RIOT SQUAD – "No Potential Threat" CD

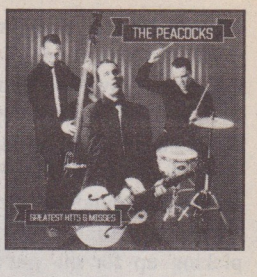
Re-ish of their posthumous LP that collected their later Rot singles, plus a bundle of extra tracks (get all that??). The first eight tracks are this UK82 band's last couple of records with their second singer, the last twelve mostly earlier material. It's no secret that I love this old UK shit; the early RIOT SQUAD could be a bit plodding, but you can't knock classic tracks like "Fuck the Tories" or "We Are Riot Squad." The later stuff amps up a lot, sounding more like the EXPLOITED, ONE WAY SYSTEM, or the MAU MAUS. All tracks are absolute classic UK82 gear, reminding me what a great band this lot were. (TB)
(Captain Oi!, www.captainoi.com)

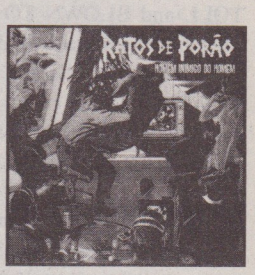
RIVER CITY TANLINES – "I'm Your Negative" CD

Probably my fave Alija Trout side-band (or is it a side-band now?). If you came expecting the cold-wave synth of the LOST SOUNDS, you got the wrong band. What makes this one different from other femme fronted garage rockers is the pedigree of the members who have done stints with RL BURNSIDE and LOVE amongst others. While their sound is rooted in punk rock traditions like a stripped-down garage AVENGERS, they have a bunch of '60s pop and even '70s rock (think JOAN JETT) sensibilities. The songwriting is masterful, playing tight as fuck, and recording near perfect. I've been hard-pressed to find fault with this label, and this release ups the ante. I could see this band blowing up WHITE STRIPES-style—keep 'em peeled. (TB)
(Dirtnap, www.dirtnaprecs.com)

ROTTER! – "Over Alt!" EP

This seems like it should be great; it's hard to go wrong with a young, energetic Danish punk band these days. But this is what could only be described as generic 21st century trash: a mix of melodic d-beat crust and straight-ahead retro thrash with some whoa-ohs and chanted group vocals thrown in. It's all played competently but fails to rise above, as it were. (PC)
(Rabalder, Martin Christiansen, Skydebane Alle 10, 3000 Helsingør, DENMARK, rabalderrecords.funus.dk)





RECORDS

RÖVSVETT – "Kangor & Shorts" EP

Here are six songs of crusty hardcore from this classic Swedish band that were recorded back in 2003. Fortunately after all these years of the band being around, the intensity and aggression are still there. Sadly, the recording on this EP sounds a little thin. Regardless, this release is definitely worth tracking down and picking up for all you Scandi-core fans out there. (RC)
(Bucho Discos, a/c Alexandre, C.P. 12 Centro, Santo Andre, SP 09015-970, BRAZIL, buchodiscos.kit.net)

SECURITY THREAT – "The Truth is Out" LP

Featuring members of BLACK LUNG and CATHETER and hailing from Denver, Colorado with a slab of wax, here's SECURITY THREAT. I would say that SECURITY THREAT is on par with bands such as DEATH-TOLL and BLOWN TO BITS out of the bay. They play heavy distorted crustcore, with trade-off screamed vocals and a rock 'n' roll vibe. I truly like the party photo insert. A solid recording adds a lot to this release. (WK)
(Civilization, www.civilization-records.com)

SCREAMPLAY – "Don't Tell Me" EP

Total rottenness. Check out the totally corny name—what a masterful play on words! The singer has a slight French accent and sounds very coy and little girl sexy, there's a shitty sounding drum machine, the guitars are SUICIDE-lite in the worst way, and there are incidental bleeps and bloops that sound like they should be on a Euro-beat record. This is so depressing and lame. I think they were going for some kind of LOST SOUNDS/SUICIDE/THE KILLS dark garage doom idea. What they ended up with is some pathetic faux dangerous dry hump record exec emptiness. This record has no soul, tame ideas, and the most embarrassing 9th grade poetry lyrics. Hell no. (LG)
(ladykinkykarrot@yahoo.com)

SHEGLANK'D SHOULDERS – "Endless Grind" CD

The accompanying one-sheet promises "100% Skate Rock," but musically this borderlines on gruff three-chord Oi-influenced HC (or vice versa) similar to THE ANTI-HEROS, especially in the vocal phrasings and delivery. Lyrically however, it's all about the skating—13 out of 14 songs to be specific. The odd one out, "King of Hangovers," shamelessly lifts the main riff from NEGATIVE APPROACH's "Nothing." Overall verdict: Nothing groundbreaking, but pretty good nonetheless. (CS)
(Handsome Dan, handsomedanrecords.com)

SINCE REMEMBERED – "Coming Alive" CD

This is fast, modern hardcore with a heavy Bridge 9 Records slant. The music is well played, though the vocals are a little too high pitched, and the lyrics unabashedly rip-off AMERICAN NIGHTMARE. (CC)
(Blood and Ink, bloodandinkrecords.com)

SIN ORDEN – "Somos la Mayoria" EP

This is SIN ORDEN's second EP on Lengua Armada and it is a fucking ripper! Nine songs of fast, thrashing political hardcore hailing from Chicago. The vocals sound super pissed and the lyrics are screamed in Spanish (with English translations enclosed). The intensity found here is off the scale! I saw these guys and I remember them having a lot of energy and the singer having a good stage presence. Hopefully they will come out this way again…hint hint! (RC)
(Lengua Armada, PMB #241, 530 Divisadero Street, San Francisco, CA 94117)

SOBRIETY STARTS TOMORROW – "In the Key of Whiskey" CD

I wasn't quite sure what to make of this one. The ten tracks have titles which are vaguely witty/obscure "Last Book I Read Was in Jail," "Punch Me in the Face Because I Suck," "Man, I'm Out of Shape for 11," etc.), and the thanks list seems to be equally sarcastic, and, er, irrelevant to the actual lyrics. What you do get is a burst of short, angry songs, that wouldn't appear out of place on a lo-fi No Idea comp. I'm picturing slightly grubby traveler types—the kind that will play in your basement and give out their CD for free, the kind that play with a wild energy and abandonment and give the ol' punk tunes a snarling run for their money. Other than that it was recorded and mixed at Golden Tone Studio, there is precious little information besides the lyrics, song titles, and band-line-up. I certainly recommend this to the beards-and-backpacks, if you can track it down. (RK)
(no address)

SPITZZ – "Touché Pussycats" CD

No messing classic sounding punk rock all the way from Boston. Constantly moving forward at a driving pace, backed up with great snarly vocals that remind me a lot of what is currently happening in heroin-filled Hollywood. Like a cheeky mix of BOTTLES AND SKULLS and the DISRACTIONS if you will. Fine stuff. (SD)
(Tario, 53 Beacon St #2, Somerville, MA 02143, www.spitz.com)

STABBED IN THE BACK "A Portrait of Noise" CD

Four-song CDs are a ridiculous waste of time. They're just as expensive to make, you have to sell them for next to nothing and to me CDs are a car or work music medium. Who wants to put on a CD in those situations and have to take the damn thing out as soon as they put it in? The only thing these things are good for is as a throw away teaser for a forthcoming full length and I really hope there's a forthcoming full length from these guys. So I guess mission accomplished on that one. The drummer of this band was also in The Lillingtons and hopefully their reunion won't hold such a thing up. I'm instantly transported to Gilman circa 1995. Anthemic hardcore that would fit very nicely in to the Easy Bay hardcore scene of that era but doesn't sound totally dated today. These cats are also totally pro-food and anti-bombs and will exchange their merch for canned goods apparently. So that can of lima beans you've been carrying around will finally be good for something. (ST)
(Basement, www.basementrecords.net)

STATE – "Nixed Life" CD

For a band that were criminally underrated back in the day, they sure have been getting a lot of play recently with boots, official reissues, and even a new LP. This is yet another great Grand Theft Audio release comprising STATE's absolute classic *No Illusions* EP and a bunch of other stuff. Full-bore ripping Midwest hardcore not unlike the NECROS or NEGATIVE APPROACH, this CD is worth getting for that 7" alone. On top of those tracks there are another 34 demo and rehearsal tracks (some dating back to 1980). Some of the demo and rehearsal stuff is pretty rough quality-wise, but there are plenty of unheard rippers scattered throughout to make it a worthy purchase. Classic stuff indeed. (TB)
(Grand Theft Audio, 501 W. Glenoaks Blvd, PMB 313, Glendale, CA 91202)

STRIKE ANYWHERE – "Dead FM" CD

STRIKE ANYWHERE's Thomas is one of today's best frontmen. A great voice as well as a motivating yet calm demeanor. On this release the band sticks to a melodic hardcore sound with less variety than past releases. This is a solid full length as the band has the heart and the leader to make it work. I must admit that I'm still waiting for this band to push itself a little more musically to make a truly classic hardcore/punk full length. Still one of my faves. (RL)
(Fat Wreck, www.fatwreckchords.com)

SUBMARINE RACES – "Wire Taps" EP

Apparently this features ex-member(s?) of the PONYS, whom I actually don't like much even though the whole world creamed their collective pants over them. "Talkin Loud" is pretty awesome, with rad spooky guitars that are somehow garage-y in a '60s suburban basement band way *and* in a '80s post-JESUS & MARY CHAIN destruction way…The way it's recorded sounds cool too; you can imagine a tall Nico-fringed girl putting it on at her first my-parents-are-away house party…It's atmospheric and dreamy. Anyway, then I flipped the record over and was instantly dismayed, the vocals sound nasal and smug, the sense of possibility disappears and it's just a boring excursion into twee pop. The MINUTEMEN cover is a total bummer—they manage to drag all the joy and possibility out of the song and turn it into a synthetic fabric pose. (LG)
(Shit Sandwich, S Elmwood, Berwyn, IL 60402)

SULACO – "Tearing Through the Roots" CD

Tech-y grindcore of the finest order. I was not a huge fan of their EP from three years ago but they seem to have progressed. The drumming is borderline ridiculous in its speed and complexity, and the guitar riffs run all over the neck of the guitar. But let's toss all the "this is complicated" stuff out the window. This is also ridiculously heavy and, umm, new sounding. A trio from upstate NY with former members of LETHARGY and KALIBAS. They do create their own sound which means it's hard to compare them to other like-minded bands; the closest I could think of was maybe BURNT BY THE SUN. (MH)
(Willowtip, 134 South Main St. Suite A, Zelienople, PA 16063)

TÆVE – "Steven Se Gal Ud" EP

While these five songs don't pack the punch of their *Homocore Aus Danemark* EP, TÆVE aren't giving up without a fight. The fourth release from the now defunct Danish hardcore band is totally raw and dirty, full of energy, and has more than a few moments of fist-waving catchiness. *Limited to 100…* (VH)
(www.taeve.dk)

THE TAKE – "Dolomite" CD

These guys have a melodic emo-core thing going on. Mostly rocking stuff with lots of "kick in the fuzz" guitar and choppy spastic music. This reminds me of that mid-'90s sound of J CHURCH as well as SUPERCHUNK and a bit of later DOUGHBOYS. Smart rock? Formerly known as math rock. (RL)
(Bombed Out, www.the-take.net)

TEENAGE HARLETS – "Up the Fixx" LP

Peppy, melodic punk from San Francisco. Songs that border on being catchy, but they are too off-kilter. The recording is also a bit muddy. If this recording was more polished, I could see it having one big commercial hit song. LP has two songs not on the CD. (CK)
(Springman, PO Box 2043, Cupertino, CA 95015, www.springmanrecords.com)

TEENAGE HARLETS – "Up the Fixx" LP

I love it when garage bands take that classic '60s sound and totally work it over, making it their own. The TEENAGE HARLETS not only have that sound but can back it up with great tunes. Like an ARMITAGE SHANKS with a pop sensability, with an almost Billy Childish feel, back in his MILKSHAKES/MIGHTY CAESARS days, all brought together with the adrenaline shot of early Rip Off Records. Finally a local garage band that doesn't send me up the wooden hills to Bedfordshire. (SD)
(Springman, PO Box 2043, Cupertino, CA 95015, www.springmanrecords.com)

TELEMARK – "Viva Suicide" LP

This is more of that prog-jazz-metal-harcore hybrid that seems to be peculiar to Germany. Owing a debt to bass-heavy bands like NOMEANSNO and the MINUTEMEN as well as to modern spazzed-out hardcore acts like BLOOD BROTHERS, TELEMARK turns in nine songs that never seem to let up, with the emphasis on speedy fretwork, a galloping rhythm section, and riffs that are sprung tighter than Boris Becker's tennis racket. (AM)
(X-Mist, www.x-mist.de)

TEN VOLT SHOCK – "6nu113" LP

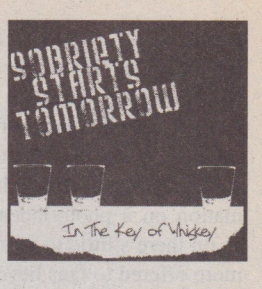
I think I've had these guys at my mercy before. Probably said something like, "call me when you grow up," or something smart assed to that effect. Well, they grew six inches over the summer, short round, and you can only smile as they suddenly tower over your expectations. These guys are running a machine-efficient version of HOT SNAKES rock action that sounds like they've been on the road for five years ejecting the worn riffs and clunky notes, keeping only the parts that make the machine "happy." I am not prone to A&R rep-style "pick-ums," but these guys could be huge with the right big-breasted ex-major-label publicity agent handling them, and compared to the drivel that makes it these days I wouldn't have any problem with that at all. Compact jabs to the skull, like Clint Eastwood delivered in his movies, nothing fancy or innovative, just getting the perp on the ground: that's TEN VOLT SHOCK. (RW)
(Bakery Outlet, PO Box 4054, St. Augustine, FL, 32085)

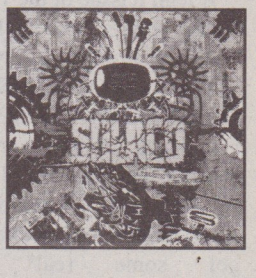
TIN BANGS – "Heavy Handed Darlings" CD

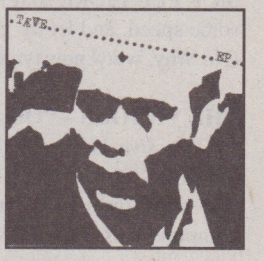
Cool punky post punk. Might have fit in with the UK's indie explosion of the mid '80s. If ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN were more rocking and more primal they would sound like this Canadian band. (RL)
(Constant Crush, www.tinbangs.com)

THIS SYSTEM KILLS / VIKTIMS – "Victims of the System" CD

A solid split CD with seven tracks of from the Welsh punk band THIS SYSTEM KILLS, who plays straight ahead modern (post-Epitaph-style) melodic punk rock with innovative breaks and an occasional LEATHERFACE/STIFF LITTLE FINGERS feel with a hint of gravel to the vocal delivery. Well-produced and solid. There are no lyrics included (there's direction to the website where they're not hosted), so whatever they're saying, it must be irrelevant and not important enough to present to







people who would actually buy this CD. France's VIKTIMS offer seven tracks of tough, solid, raging hardcore with a hard-driven straight ahead attack of speed metal riffing, shouted vocals, blast beat-y drums, and howling vocals. A Myspace link is sadly the only information on a photo-laden four-panel insert, so again there's little to remark upon, and nothing more offered to fans beyond solidly great bashing of punky hardcore. Good CD, sadly in abysmal, thoughtless packaging. (KS)
(Mass Productions, www.massprod.com)

TREND – "Patientenverfugung" EP

The 50-color screen-printed cover looks great but holy shit it smells like a crusty dying of scurvy. Worst smelling record ever. Maybe they used the blood of said dying crusty in the ink? *Anyway,* this is some catchy Germanic post punk, which isn't exactly what I am looking for in a record nowadays… It's very tidy and restrained—I like more desperate destruction in my post punk. This is an uptight dinner party rather than a falling apart dance party. I don't know what it is but there's something really late '90s about it, like Sonny would have put it out on GSL. (LG)
(X-Mist, PO Box 1545, 72195 Nagold, GERMANY, www.x-mist.de)

VERBAL ABUSE – "Just an American Band" 12"

A legit reissue of the 1983 debut record from Nikki Sikki's post-SICK PLEASURE band. Unlike their political Bay Area contemporaries like MDC, DEAD KENNEDYS, and the staff at *MRR*, VERBAL ABUSE didn't really seem to give a fuck. Their take on hardcore was desperate and nihilistic. As Nikki says in the song "Social Insect," "Destroy whatever's in your way/I infect society everyday." This record's got some real classics—"Leeches," "Disintegration," "Verbal Abuse" (originally a SICK PLEASURE song)—so throw it on, shoot some speed, and let th' good times roll… (CS)
(No Way, www.nowayrecords.com)

THE VICIOUS – "Obsessive" EP

Obsessive is by far the best thing that the VICIOUS has done so far. From the opening title track through the three other songs that comprise this 7", the VICIOUS shows us a power that was lacking on their 12". Nope, this EP is just four songs of punk power that would fit fine with recent Scandinavian bands like GORILLA ANGREB and YOUNG WASTENERS. The VICIOUS may be a little bit snottier than those aforementioned punks, but they all share a modern take of dark LA circa '81. Great stuff. (JF)
(Feral Ward, www.feralward.com)

VIOLENCIA VIOLETAS – "Violent Living" CD

DIY anarcho-hardcore with quirky guitar stylings from Portugal on a label based in Texas. The songs are catchy and driving, but the art and packaging is so ugly and digital that it's hard to actually recommend this release. Still, it made for moderately enjoyable if somewhat disposable listening. (GN)
($6 ppd: Cat Food Money, c/o Chris Leger, 420 North Street #105, San Marcos, TX 78666, catfoodmoney.org)

VLADIMIRS – "Serpent Girl & Songs to Shed the Skin" CD

The vocals doom this record to the slagheap—from the very first tune. Modern-day reunion-circuit MISFITS with a metal edge. (JH)
(www.bloodandgutsrecords.com)

VÖETSEK – "Selected Works 2003-2006" CD

42(!!!) throttling wicked thrash tracks from the Bay Area's VÖETSEK, culled from their recent 7"s, splits, and comp appearances and including everything from a NEGATIVE FX cover to blasting originals. There's a variety of sound quality throughout these 30-second-to-a-minute-and-a-half bursts of harsh screamed vocals, blast-beats, rushing guitars, and quick guitar leads, but an overall consistency of scathing thrash!! For someone who missed some of these tracks the first time, it's a kind of a bummer that there's no lyrics in favor of a (really nice) scrapbooklet of band photos, as the bits of lyrics I can discern out of the screams sound harsh and cool, but it's otherwise and excellent collection to crank loud! Ace! (KS)
(Six Weeks, 225 Lincoln Avenue, Cotati, CA 94931, www.sixweeksrecords.com)

WRISTS – "Freak of Nature" EP

Some boomy shouting treated with a bit 'o reverby echo, some tinny keyboards, some cardboard drums, some frantic frothing, some struggling guitars. It's all kinda LOST SOUNDS-alike in the end. Songs, Cuthbert, I said bring me *songs*, not this weakly perfunctory broth! Away with this. (RW)
(Die Stasl, no address)

WRONG DAY TO QUIT – "Vicissitudes" CD

Right off the bat this lady is like singing ipecac. God damn. She sounds she needs to get to a hospital before she pukes up a lung and makes me sick by proxy. Not to say that I'm not in to the brutality…she's just hitting something that's getting my bile all churned up. Then all the sudden out of nowhere we've got even toned singing. I booked a show for The Assistant a long time ago but I can't really recall what they sound like. So I can't tell you if this sounds like them or not but it does have members of. I think that's worth mentioning because this isn't a shitty band and I know the people who will be in to this will check it out because of the Assistant connection. This just isn't hitting me the right way personally. The only other thing to say is that the booklet is pretty cool. Lyrics on one side and then on the other more in depth explanations of the songs mostly personal meanings. (ST)
(29 North, www.29northrecords.com)

THE WRONGMEN – "Den of Vipers" CD

Bombastic and pissed in a CONVERGE sort of way. Sure, it's hardcore, heavy and pissed, but I like that there are some good old rock 'n' roll riffs thrown in like a lot of early punk—and they aren't afraid of noise and feedback either. "No Heroes," for example, lifts an AC/DC riff (which was a lifted blues riff), and it's smack dab in this 55 second scorcher. The diversity of sounds on the CD held my interest. The first couple tracks are short, heavy, discordant, and pissed, but the last track is a bit over 12 minutes, takes it's time, and reminds me of ISIS. They call Auckland, New Zealand home. (MH)
(Action Man, www.actionmanrecords.com)

YOU ME AND THE ATOM BOMB – "Shake Up" CD

Mixing in too much sugar and not enough sweat, YOU ME AND THE ATOM BOMB's 44 minutes of LEATHERFACE/HOT WATER MUSIC worship leave me feeling like I just spent my Friday night watching a clichéd coming-of-age movie while drinking diet soda... it wasn't completely boring, or completely awful, but the lack of sincerity brings out a lukewarm disgust that's hard to shake no matter how many fucking breakdowns you throw in. I don't mind the cleanliness, the catchiness, or even the slick production... But *Shake Up* isn't a punk record, or a "melodic-hardcore" record, it's a cut-and-paste job, packaged up and ready to gó for the Warped Tour... Now I've got to clean the vomit off my crotch. Thanks! (VH)
(Household Name, PO Box 12286, London, SW9 6FE, UNITED KINGDOM)

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH FACES – LP

One of the new wave of female-fronted punk rock/new wave bands that are heavily influenced by a lot of the early California hardcore/punk rock. This is good shit and these guys are definitely on the right track, though I would like to feel a little more energy from them. I also like the fact that they've got the token male on bass. (How many times have we seen the token female on bass?) And they're spreading the word across the northwest. Very cool. (KK)
(Rapid Pulse, www.rapidpulserecords.com)

V/A – "Bored Teenagers Vol. 4" CD

As the subtitle says, this CD features "16 Great British Punk Originals '77-'82." This

time around we have the CANE featuring Kirk Brandon of THEATRE OF HATE fame, THE ORDINARYS, THE MACHINES, THE RUNNING SORES, ELEVATORS, STERIOD KIDDIES, THE INTROZE, and PUBLIC PISSTAKE featuring Mr. Rotten in an apparent early version of the song "Public Image." A worthy comp of some of the most obscure old UK bands. (RL)
(Detour, www.detour-records.co.uk)

V/A – "Music to Make Your Ears Hurt Trey" CD

The third compilation in the series (hence the "Trey"), although I can't say I'm familiar with the previous installments. My luck has apparently run out, as this is littered with bad hard rock, typical trucker-hat bro jams, suspect rudeness, and just plain crap. I can't imagine anyone being into any of this. (MC)
(Black and Blue, P.O. Box 410325, Cambridge, MA 02141)

V/A – "No One Gets Out Alive" CD

Here you get a solid comp of street punk, hardcore, and Oi bands from all over. Crewcuts and flight jackets are the order of the day here. Tough music and gruff vocals by a smorgasbord of bands like KLASSE KRIMINAL, FIRST OFFENSE, RUN LIKE HELL, THE 86'D, and a whole bunch more. One of my favorite tracks was the FED UP! track. It had a nice old school hardcore feel and for some reason reminded me of early AGNOSTIC FRONT. Bruce Roehrs column readers take note of this one, you won't be let down. (RC)
(United Riot, www.unitedriotrecords.com)

V/A – "Not With That Attitude" CD

This is a benefit for the Red Cross Tsunami relief featuring a bunch of bands that all somehow sound like the music I had to listen to when I worked for two weeks at Urban Outfitters. Mostly pop punk/alternative emo-style sounds. Comp features MACHINE GO BOOM, THIS IS EXPLODING, ALLERGIC TO WHORES (worst band name ever??), DELAY, VISTA CRUISERS, JOHNIE 3, and many more. I think they are all local Cleveland, OH, bands but I am not sure. The only song I didn't mind was the one by the JACK-KNIFE POWERBOMBS, which kind of had a Dangerhouse records feel, but only kind of. Most of the feel was bad emo. So, not my thing really. NIGHT-BREED have a DC feel, I would reference the HOOVER/LINCOLN split. But way more laboured and modern emo. Anyway... (LG)
(www.cleveland-aintitfun.com)

V/A – "Paxta-Core: Underground Uzbekistan" LP

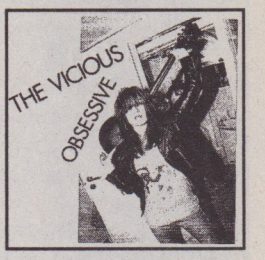
Mind-boggling. If I had to think of one country in the world that almost certainly did *not* have any punk rock, it would be Uzbekistan. In this oppressive former Soviet country in Central Asia most of the population works on government-owned cotton fields for pennies a day. Certainly the kind of place that would breed rebellion, but not where you would expect to find, I dunno, an amplifier? This album could only be the product of the Tian An Men 89 label that has also brought us recent comps from Tajikistan and Iran, and is working on putting out stuff from Kenya and Iraq! As with other comps like this, the music runs the gamut of genres: very rudimentary garage-y punk like the Euro/KBD sounds of HARDCORE OPA and RED-AKSIYA; weird hybrid shit like the GERMS-meets-hip-hop-rock-thrash of SUCHIY POTROKH; as well as ska-punk (BROGEN BOGEN), techno-minimalism (BGMOLTSY I GROBOVY-ERZHTSY), folk-rock (SKISSERZ), and relatively slick-sounding new wave/rock (SLEZY SOLNTSA). But to even be new wave in a place like Uzbekistan is probably a dangerous endeavor. Limited to 500 copies—get it now! (PC)
(€16/$21 ppd: Fred Brahim, 17 Rue de la Foret, 67340 Menchhoffen, FRANCE, www.geocities/tam89rds)

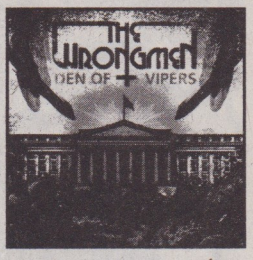
V/A – "Underground Tajikistan: Dushanbe Punkers & Rockers" LP

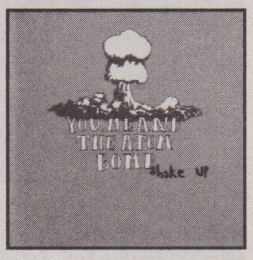
Lük Haas, the man behind Tian An Men 89 Records is one of the truly unsung heroes of DIY punk. For over twenty years, he has been championing scenes in such far flung places as Kosovo, Iran, and now Tajikistan (and Uzbekistan: see the *Paxta-Core* comp review in this issue). He has contributed countless scene reports to *MRR* over the years, starting with such scenes as the Czech Republic in the early '80s and most recently contributing a scene report from Tajikistan & Uzbekistan (see issue #279 for that). This comp documents nine different Tajik bands, ranging in sounds from the amazing, inspiring female-fronted new wave of ZAPADNY KVARTAL (Western Block) to the thrash HC/metal sounds of RAG-NAROCK. As with some of TAM 89's other recent comps, the quality of the tracks is hit and miss, but overall the songs on *Underground Tajikistan* are actually quite stellar. The first band ZLO ("Evil"), is an amazing, off-kilter *KBD*-style band that blew me away, and songs by KIDE & THE JEANS COMMUNITY (is that not the most amazing band name ever?) are great, bizarre, outsider rock 'n' roll. There are a couple of ballad-like clunkers, but overall I found this LP totally exciting and inspiring. Recommended. (GN)
(€16/$21 ppd: Fred Brahim, 17 Rue de la Foret, 67340 Menchhoffen, FRANCE, www.geocities/tam89rds)

V/A – "Twin Cities Hardcore" CD

As they state in the liner notes, the intent of this compilation is to bring together a variety of punk styles and "bring some unity back to the scene." I don't know about the unity part, but this compilation is definitely varied in musical styles. In fact, it is so varied I found it difficult to listen to. While I appreciate the concept of the compilation, most listeners do not have musical tastes as varied as the genres covered on this comp. It is all here—metal, punk, hardcore, noise, emo, pop, grind—whatever you want to hear. Some of the bands on here include IN DEFENCE, FORMALDEHYDE JUNKIES, 4 MINUTE WARNING, BUILD OR BURN, HORROR, THE FUCK YEAHS, plus 24 more (for a total of 30). There were some good tracks, a lot of mediocre ones and a few really bad ones. This was alright at best and certainly nothing special. Plus it would have been nice if they would've included some sort of expanded CD booklet or additional info about the bands. (RC)
(www.tchardcorejournal.com)







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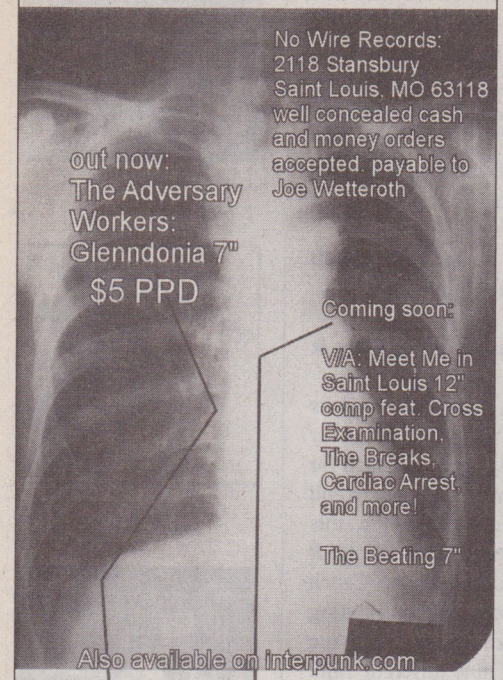

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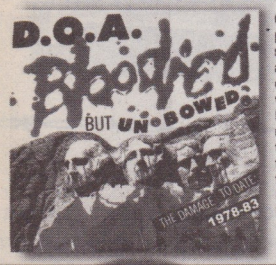

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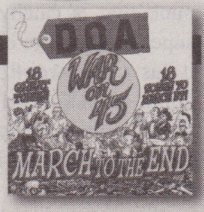

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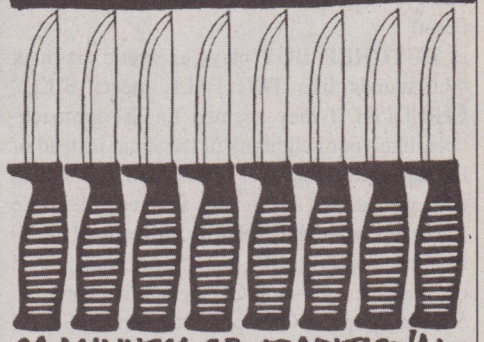

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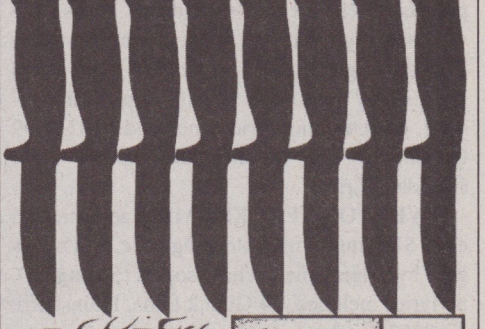

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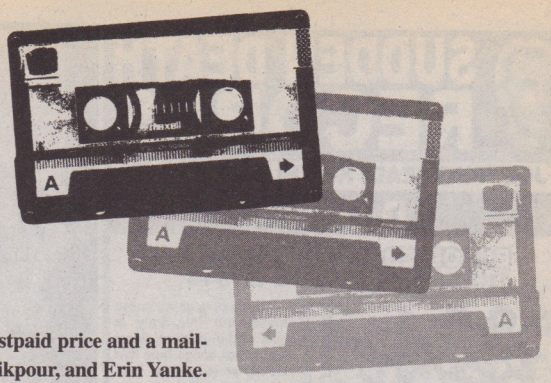

Send demos and CD-Rs to: Erin Yanke, PO Box 1113, Portland, OR 97207. Please provide a postpaid price and a mailing address with your demo! Reviews by Peter Avery, Ariel Awesome, Chris Hubbard, Golnar Nikpour, and Erin Yanke.

BLANKET OF M plays lo-fi melodic mid-tempo pop punk. The vocals are sung with a titch of snotty, but are mostly straightforward. All the bands I can think to compare them to were on Lookout! Records in the early '90s, so let's just say they'd sound great on a comp from that era. ($2 ppd. 7-song CD, no lyrics included. 11777 Brazos Way, Lindale, TX 75771.) (Erin)

BUTCHER BOY plays energetic art punk that sounds like THE FALL meets BILLY CHILDISH if they seemed totally approachable, like your neighbors in the squat instead of like cloistered rock stars. Bass and guitar with dual vocals that are mostly shouted. The pace fluctuates with the intensity. Awesome! (2.50 Pounds ppd (UK), 2.75 Pounds ppd (Worldwide). 18-song CD, lyrics included. c/o 56a Infoshop, 56 Crampton St., London SE 17, UK.) (Erin)

DACTYL is a hardcore band with rock sensibilities. Their music is heavy and grinding but with a driving rock feel. Several songs are straigh-out hardcore, mixing sludgy stuff like BUZZOV-EN with faster stuff like early DEAD AND GONE, while others add a sort of '80s rock 'n' roll feel to the mix. On the whole I would have to make a local comparison and say that they remind me of THE UNIFORM. The CD is well recorded, the band is super tight and this just may be worth checking out. (5-song CD, no lyrics. www.dactyldactyl.com.) (Pete)

DANGERLOVES play some sweet power pop. They're mostly mid-tempo, but mix up the pace between fast and slow dance songs. The vocals really drive this band, charming with a hint of toughness. I have one of their songs stuck in my head a lot, which is a pleasure! (6-song cassette, no lyrics included. 102-1609 Queen St. W., Toronto, ON, M6R 1A9, Canada.) (Erin)

EVERYONE EXCEPT ME is acoustic and emo. She sings with a pleading style, and mixes it up by singing melancholy songs. (5-song CD, no lyrics included. 14 Gulick Lane, Plainsboro, NJ 08536.) (Erin)

FIFTY DAYS AT ILIUM plays melodic, emotional hardcore songs with sung vocals. The music, for its part, is pretty catchy but still driving, mixing pop punk and melodic hardcore with the SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE version of emo. Unfortunately, on this recording, the music takes a backseat to the vocals. The female vocalist sounds like she is trying too hard to be a "good" singer and (except for when she is off key) ends up sounding like AVRIL LAVINE (not sure if I spelled that right being that I can't find all of her records that I own). What this really ends up hurting is the heavy parts of the songs when the music is really going at it and the overpowering vocals just sit there trying to be pretty. (4-song CD, with lyrics. www.fiftydaysatilium.com.) (Pete)

GIANT HAYSTACKS are one of the Bay Area's finest bands, and this cassette tape, called *FCC Violations,* compiles two radio appearances, one from May 2005 and one from March 2006 (with new bassist Alan, formerly of YOUR MOTHER). This band has only gotten better and better, mixing excellent, thoughtful lyrics and art with sometimes somber and sometimes playful (post-)punk. The song "Young Shavers" always gives me chills when they play it live, and their newer stuff is among their best and most catchy yet. The opening song, a noisy instrumental jam featuring guitarist Jer Reid reminds me a *lot* of THE EX, who GIANT HAYSTACKS usually only call to mind peripherally. Anyway, I really love this band, and this tape is no exception, but act fast 'cause there are only a hundred copies out there. (27-song cassette, no lyrics included. PO Box 22971, Oakland, CA 94609. www.gianthaystacks.com.) (Golnar)

This pro-printed demo tape by **IDIOTS RULE** (released in conjunction with Germany's Hate Records) is great. The foundation is build on Swedish and UK HC, but there is a heavy '80s US hardcore influence as well. Reminds me of bands like POISON IDEA who the DISCHARGE template and ran with it. Good stuff, and sounds better than many vinyl EPs! Keep an eye out for this band. (9-song cassette, lyrics included. Waste Your Hate, PO Box 105824, 28058 Bremen, Germany. upinsmoke@ajz-bielefeld.de.) (Chris)

IT'LL GROW BACK have some straightforward rock moments that are mixed in with a FAITH NO MORE kind of quirkiness. The vocals have equal presence with the music, and they're sung with clear annunciation, or shouted with snotty overtones. This band is like a smorgasbord of punk rock from the '90s. ($6 ppd. 9-song CD, no lyrics included. PO Box 824, Tulare, CA 93275.) (Erin)

JUDGE DREAD plays right on the line between punk and metal. The punk influences are speed, funny Youth Crew back-up vocals, and the lead singer screeching from hell. The metal part is the guitar sound and solos, and some of the song intros. They've done their homework, and sound like they're feelin' it! ($3 ppd or trade! 8-song CD, lyrics included. 14 Blatch Ave., St. John's, NL A1C 4P5, Canada.) (Erin)

KILLER SQUIRREL plays mid-tempo punk that is catchy and angry. The sound is super shallow (no bass, drum machine) and yet it has a nice weird robots-making-music thing going on. It's weird, but I kinda like it. Where was this dude during Geekfest? (14-song CD, lyrics included. PO Box 13380 Mill Creek, WA 98082) (Ariel)

I may be mistaken but I believe that the **LOVE SONGS / SHARP KNIFE** split came out some time ago. Anyway, LOVE SONGS (fronted by Craig from YOUR MOTHER, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?, COLBOM, etc.) plays two goofy pop punk songs about eating problems and loving their dog. The songs are played well but the cheese factor is a bit high. SHARP KNIFE does three hardcore tunes on the other side. They mix up blast beats with screaming, driving emotional stuff which gives them a sound that is a combination of thrashcore and TORCHES TO ROME-style emo. (5-song cassette, lyrics for LS, no insert from SK. Grateful…, 505 Washtenaw Rd., Ypsilanti, MI 48197. www.thelovesongs.com) (Pete)

POISON CONTROL plays pretty basic punk rock songs. They mix the early '80s punk sound (CIRCLE JERKS, BLACK FLAG) with crusty hardcore like THE PIST. Up-tempo drumming backs up three chords riffs and a screaming vocalist. It's pretty simple stuff but done well. (6-song cassette, with lyrics. 155 Harvard Ave., Allston, MA 02134. thepoisoncontrol@gmail.com) (Pete)

NANCY REAGAN DEATH SQUAD call this a demo-ography—a compilation of their

first three recording sessions. They continue to play traditional fast part mosh/part thrash, fast and negative just like the punks! The vocals are shouted, the guitar is distorted and buzzy, but the real drive behind the songs is the drummer. "Reagan's Dead and We're Still Pissed," yes, we are. ($3 ppd. 13-song CD, lyrics included. 20 Oakridge Rd, Bristol, CT 06010.) (Erin)

RAVAGED plays crust punk that flirts with metallic influences, but stays brutal and tough, fast and punk the whole time! Yee haw! The vocals are venomous and fast, the music is fast, the demo is short, and not a moment is wasted. Great. (6-song CD, no lyrics included. Boeregemstraat 8, 9840 Zevergem, Belgium.) (Erin)

RELATIONSHIPS is a teen girl street-punk slumber party, complete with a love note in fancy cursive. Stand out tunes are "Modern Girl" and "Four Year Friend"—both have intensely catchy choruses and tough vocals; reminds me of THE LOUDMOUTHS. Pretty good. (7-song cassette, lyrics included. Re:Generation, 155 Harvard Ave, Allston, MA 02134. relationshipsboston@gmail.com.) (Ariel)

SELF DESTRUCT plays a version of mid-'80s UK punk that reminds me of the late-'80s East Bay bands who were also totally influenced by that time. They play kind of fast, with the vocals and the guitars vying for your attention. The vocals are sung in the half-spoken style. Good! (5-song Cassette, lyrics included. spaceboy200@msn.com.) (Erin)

SHORTSTACK plays a version of crust-pop I am fairly well versed in, and not only because I lived across the hall from Sweetooth. It's all romance and grit, stories about losin' it, blood, coffee, hope, heartache, and being the punx. If you like your lo-fi low low low, like there is dirt inside your tape deck, and you like your songs to be a little bit bitter and a little bit over-romanced (and I know who you people are!), then this has your name on it. ($1 ppd. 8-song cassette, lyrics included. Ella, 344 W. 72nd St #8A, NYC, NY 10023, napalmbrew@yahoo.com) (Ariel)

RUSS SUBSTANCE plays his acoustic guitar and sings songs about life and bikes and politics. Is there a "Bloomington" in England? If so, this guy is so from there. So chill out, sit down, and be quiet. Please no clapping, we snap our fingers between songs during quiet time. Shhhhh… (8-song CD, lyrics included. PO Box 1398 Southampton, SO16 9WX, UK. russsmith1983@hotmail.com.) (Ariel)

TARPIT gave themselves an apropos name! Sludgy and thick, doomy and s-l-o-w—you get the idea. The vocals add well to the morass of quicksand they're trying to trap you in; lulling and dark, and then the vocals that are more screaming will start, becoming the only frantic part of the recording. The samples also snapped me out of the lull, but made me laugh. (6-song CD, no lyrics included. 3350 Kesnick Rd, Baltimore, MD 21211.) (Erin)

Skate Attack! is a skate thrash comp featuring the bands KILLED IN ACTION, TEMPER, STREET SHARKS, MAKHLOK PEROSAK, ANS, BAIL OUT!, CONCRETE EVIDENCE, COMMON ENEMY, BADEATINGHABITS, and MEDIA CIRCUS. If you think Pushead is the greatest artist of all time and shredding the gnar is your jam, then this tape is calling to you. Skate or die, brother. (20-song cassette, lyrics not included. Give Praise, PO Box 494, Barnstable, MA 02630-0494. www.givepraise.com.) (Ariel)

BORN AGAIN$T

PHOTO: CHRIS BOARTS-LARSON

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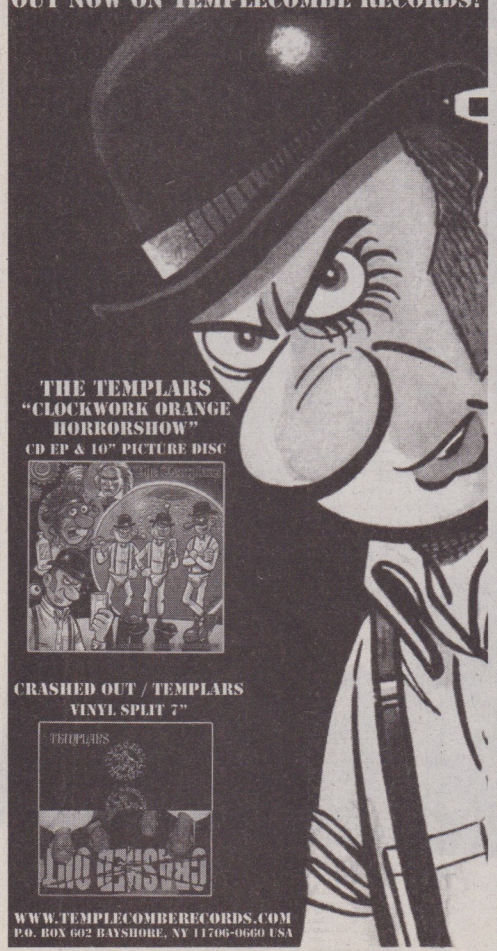

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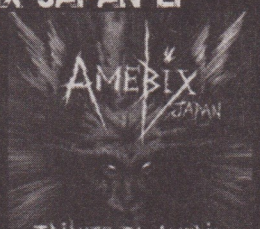

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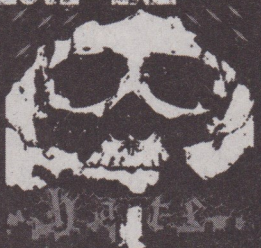

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ZINES

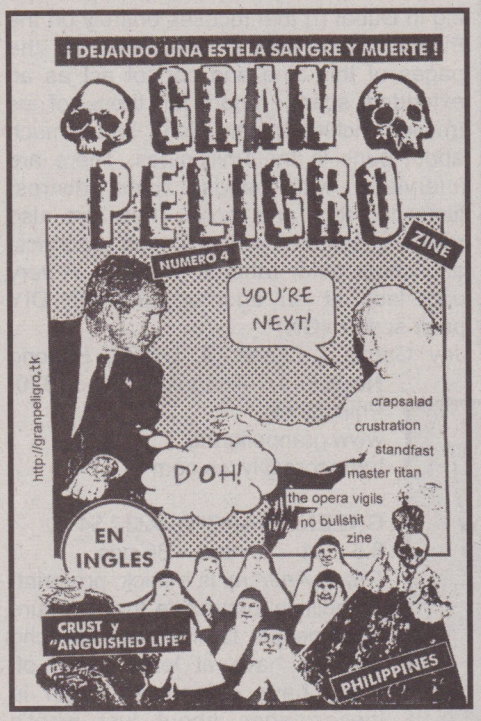
Reviews by: Julia Booze (JB), Paul Curran (PC), Mikel Delgado (MD), Layla Gibbon (LG), Cassie Harwood (CH), Chris Hubbard (CS), Harald Hartmann (HH), Nick Mangel (NM), Jeff Mason (JM), Golnar Nikpour (GN), Casey Ress (CR), Andy Shoup (AS), Thera Webb (TW).

Send zines for review to: MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please include the following info on a separate piece of paper with your zine: postpaid price, international price, do you take trades?, size, copied or printed?, number of pages, language, mailing address, website address, email address.

BEAT SHEET #1 / Free
17 x 11 – copied – 2 pgs
This mini-zine is allegedly the precursor to a regular sized zine. Though brief and a little bit haphazardly put together (some text is cut off or pasted over), for what it is, this is good—cool cut 'n' paste aesthetic, good musical coverage, photos. There's an excerpt from an interview with the Formaldehyde Junkies, a piece on bands that recorded for a college radio show hosted by the author (Emerson College's Radiobeat show), and some interviews. I'm looking forward to the real thing. (CS)
Matt Beat / 6 Ashley Rd. / Rowley, MA 01969

THE CIA MAKES SCIENCE FICTION UNINTERESTING #4/ $1.50
5.5 x 4.5 – printed – 32 pgs
I've had the pleasure of reading a previous issue of this zine and was impressed by the thorough research that went into its production. This issue, focusing on the FBI assassination Filiberto Ojeda Rios in 2005, is just as well researched and written. For those who don't know, Ojeda Rios was a Puerto Rican independence leader gunned down in his own home by the FBI. Abner Smith presents not only the story of Ojeda Rios, but also a brief, detailed history of colonization in Puerto Rico and the US repression against independence movements. Slowly but surely Smith is leaving a collection of work that needs desperately to be recorded. (CR)
PO Box 14332 / Portland, OR 97293
www.microcosmpublishing.com

CUTLASS #10 / $5
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 96 pgs
Can you feel the toner rubbing off your fingers? The intensity of blackness on my fingertips indicates the depth of my fascination. The cover depicts a stenciled girl throwing up her heart, which pretty much tells you how it reads. She really goes for it, and I think the reason is because it is the last issue and it took a bunch of years for it to come out. I don't know this person but I feel like I do, or that I want to, and I figure that is what zines are for. The eulogy to 40th St. Warehouse is my favorite, although of note is the loveletter to the library's history room, which is buried in the disclaimer of the scholarly (but reader-friendly) section about the history of the female Chinese-American San Francisco experience. Also, there's an interview with



a musician friend who is motivated by nerdiness and the zine comes with a burned CD of his. Most of all the layout of this zine is really appealing but that might be because it is mostly done on a typewriter and I hate computers. (JB)
Janice Flux / PO Box 720078 / San Francisco, CA 94172

DIGIT #37 / $6
11x 8 – printed – 48 pgs – French
No one can go wrong reading *Dig It!* Definitely on of the best rock 'n' roll fanzines east of San Francisco. Included in this issue are interviews with Dollhouse, Les Fatals, The Cinders, Off The Hip Records, and Alan Milman. There is also an article on Nikki Sudden. Finally the fanzine comes with lots of new gossip in the columns Through The Grapevine, and Shake Some Action. Check out the *Dig It* radio show on the internet at the fanzine's website. It comes on at 12:30 in the afternoon PST and 3:30 EST. There is lots of really good music played for the two-hour show. (HH)
c/o Armadillo / 32 Rue Pharaon / 31000 Toulouse / France
www.digitfanzine@chez.com

DOWN WITH THE DRIVER #1 & #2 / Free
8.5 x 7 – copied – 36 pgs
Cool zine here from Wisconsin, covering predominantly that scene. #1 comes with a free CD-R including the bands interviewed in that issue: Supersmashers, Offend Your Friends, Skattsmen, etc. #2 is less music-oriented and is mainly comics, humor, and silly writing. In my opinion #1 is more substantive and is something these guys could definitely build on. (NM)
701 Pine St / Athens, WI 54411

DWELLING PORTABLY Sept. '06 / $1.50
8.5 x 5.5 – stapled – 22 pgs
Journal-esque collection of tips, stories, and thoughts on living outdoors. A wealth of information, all typed on a typewriter and crammed into this small zine. (CS)
PO Box 190-D / Philomath, OR 97370

ELECTRIC ISLAND #1 / $1
5.5x 5.5 – copied – 28 pgs
I was supposed to have this review in a month ago, but I was delayed. Guess what? You didn't miss anything. Geographically themed zines can be really great; this one about New York City is not. Some of the writing about the city itself is fairly interesting, such as the story of gentrification around the Brooklyn Battery

Tunnel and the experience of the Staten Island ferry. These parts don't make up for the pages filled with reflections on dope and shooting up on the roofs of abandoned buildings. Sorry, I'm not straight edge, but I have no interest in reading romanticized passages about slow destruction. If you are, this is the zine for you I suppose. (CR)
Jonathan Tesnakis / 77 Kirshon Ave / Staten Island, NY 10314

FACIAL DISOBEDIENCE #4.5 / 50p + SAE, $1 or trade
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 20 pgs
Interesting personal-style zine from the UK. Better than most of the per-zines out there, but then again the content matter could have been what snagged me: being a cynical older punk, labor disputes, socialism, literature, etc. Pretty good. (NM)
PO Box 1398 / Southampton, 5016 9WX / UK

FAG SCHOOL #1 & #2 / $3
8.5 x 11 – copied
OK, here's the thing about reviewing zines: most of them suck. Really, really suck. But then, every so often there is a zine so amazing that it totally makes up for it. *Fag School* is one of those zines, and is pretty much the funniest shit I have read in fanzine form, ever. I saw the editor of this zine, the inimitable Brontez, read some of the selections from these two issues of *Fag School* at a zine reading that features some other SF zine luminaries, and he pretty much totally stole the show. How can I explain what *Fag School* is all about? I probably can't do it adequate justice, but just know that when there is shit to be talked, fucked up-edness to be called out, advice to be dished, and cruising stories to be told, Brontez is here to do the job. Seriously, the cruising reviews (and job reviews) in issue #2 are life-changing; I am tempted to type out full passages but instead I'll just tell you to get some money together and send it to *Fag School* 'cause you need copies of this zine for yourself. This is really well-written, well layed-out in classic cut 'n' paste style, funny as hell, totally inspiring, and radical too, proving that you don't have to be boring and Italian sneakers clad or totally dry in presenting your agenda to be an SF queer these days. When *FS* first came into *MRR* HQ, me, Martin, & Jess seriously fought over the two copies, all giggles over tea in the kitchen like the happy little homo family that we are. *Fag School*, you are the greatest. (GN)
Brontez / 51A McCoppin St. / San Francisco, CA 94103

GRAN PELIGRO #4 / $?
4.25 x 5.5 – copied – 46 pgs
A cool fanzine done by a Filipino punk living in Dubai (!) that focuses entirely on the Filipino punk scene. Interviews fill the pages of this zine and sort of act as an extended scene report for those of us (myself included) who don't know much about punk in the Philippines. There are interviews with bands, zines, distros, film/video folx, and more. There are also reviews, assorted writings, some comics, and some other random graphics. A very cool look at an under-represented DIY punk scene. (GN)
Jay Garcia / Cluster-M, Lot-72, Bagong Nayon 1, Antipolo City 1870, Philippines
www.granpeligro.tk
turbocore@lycos.com

GREEN ANARCHY #23 / $4
8.5 x 11 – printed – 86 pgs
Green Anarchy is a thick, pro-printed political magazine that I'm sure most people familiar with anarcho activism have at least heard of. Many have opined at length in these pages about just what's wrong with being an "anti-civilization" journal, so I won't go into that here. Suffice it say, I have a number of basic theoretical differences with the guiding principles of *GA*. Nonetheless, I admit that the magazine is well put together and looks relatively good. Despite the positives, however, I still find reading it pretty much totally un-inspiring. (GN)
PO Box 11331 / Eugene, OR 97440
collective@greenanarchy.org

THE HILLSIDE RAMBLER #2 / $1
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 16 pgs
Another CrimethInc zine romanticizing the intake of coffee the overhaul of "the system." You know, fuck work, electricity, deodorant, shaving your legs, paying rent, etc. Let's squat the planet and live off community gardens and bread dumpsters. J-man rulez. (CH)
Chris / 100-Z Hudson Ave / Athens, OH 45101

THE LEAN MEAN SHIT-TALKING ZINE #2 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 24 pgs
Maybe one shouldn't judge a book by its cover, but a zine that features crudely drawn characters exposing themselves, farting, and standing in front of a pile of crap, isn't going to take you by surprise once you read it. Inside this handwritten gem from New Zealand are interviews with Big Bird, road trip reflections, and reviews of cider and homebrew. Did I mention the poetry? (CR)
Cameron Ross / 23 Daniell St / Newtown / Wellington / New Zealand

MAJOR MALFUNCTION #5 / $1 or Trade
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 28 pgs
Awesome total DIY punk rock zine from the Philippines. I have always been a fan of the scene there and so many very well done zines come from there. *MM* covers several genres from punk to HC to SXE. This issue has interviews with Vex, La Familia, Revelation Records (!), Struggle Against, Imprint, and scene reports from Santos City and Bogota, Colombia. Lots of reviews and columns as well. An excellent worldwide hardcore zine. (NM)
Walid Ma'Rouf / #11 St. Martin St. / Rosalia Village 2 / Tandang Sora, Quezon City / 1116 Philippines

OX FANZINE #67 / $7
11 x 8 – printed – 140pgs – German
This edition starts off with a great cover photo of the New York Dolls, and is followed by an excellent interview with Sylvain Sylvain. The interview is a great reminder of where punk rock really started and the transition it made from the sixties i.e. via the Dolls and the mid '70s New York scene. Also included in this issue are interviews with the bands Hammerhai, Touch & Go Records celebrating their 25th anniversary, Pretty Girls Make Graves, Good Riddance, and many more bands. As usual this fanzine is absolutely loaded with new record reviews, lots of really cool ads, and the other assorted stuff that make *Ox* an excellent read. Finally, the zine comes with its customary free CD sampler this one being composed of twenty-nine songs including the bands NoMeansNo, She-

Male Trouble and others. (HH)
PO Box 102225 / 42766 Haan / Germany
www.ox-fanzine.de

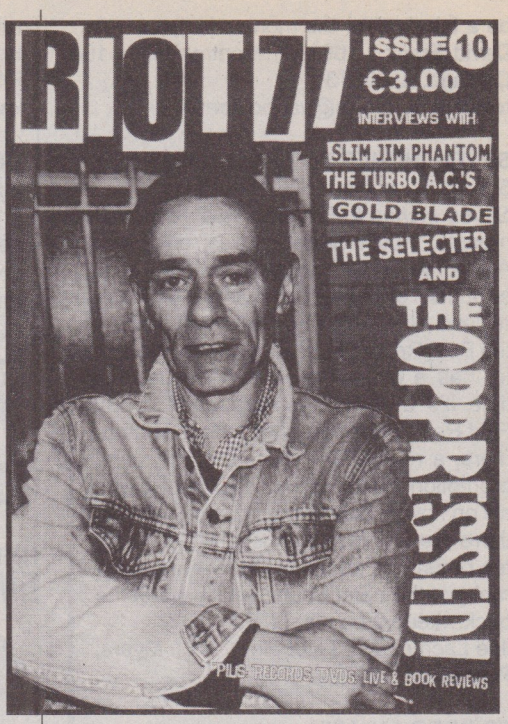
PHOTOS #1? / $?
4.5 x 5.5 – copied – 104 pgs
Photos is the creation of Justin Rhody and is one of those types of zines I've been seeing more and more in the last several years: the color-copied, photo-based zine. It's an awesome idea, if executed in the right way. Which leads to this question: did *Photos* do this great new format justice? Well, uh, *not really*. When I see a zine come in that tops the 100-page mark, or even the 75-page mark, I sort of take notice. I mean, there is something going on with a big zine, or at least, there should be. You should either have a huge amount of content, or a lot to say, or else, you've sort of set yourself up. It's like making a four-hour movie. How are you going to fill up those 240 minutes? The photos in *Photos* are mediocre at best. If Rhody had used taken the 20 best photos of the bunch and made his zine from those, his zine might have rated a C+. More unsolicited advice: study the masters and keep shooting. (AS)
PO Box 23 / Bloomington, IN 47402

PUNX IS LADIES / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 44 pgs
A crucial and critical look at women playing music in the current punk scene. Most of the women interviewed in this zine are on the younger side (17-25) and it was interesting to read of their struggles for acceptance as musicians, empowerment in playing music and serious critique of the (*still*) male dominated punk scene. In some ways, it was so incredibly inspiring and I could relate on so many levels, wishing that this zine had existed when I started playing music. On the other hand, it really depressed me, realizing that the same things we were complaining about 15, 20, etc years ago have not changed at all ("girls are generally the bag or jacket holders while their boyfriends will play on stage"). I was recently complaining to a friend of the lack of all-women bands in the punk scene nowadays (not to belittle the contributions of the many women who are still rocking!) and I really long for the days when riot grrrl and the queer punk scene were *really* strong and active (at least here in the Bay Area), and really, doing their own thing outside the male punk rock bubble. Honestly, I don't have much faith in women (and/or queers or people of color) assimilating within the "normal" (i.e. white male) punk scene—and I would love to see more analysis of the mass exodus of women/queers/people of color from the punk scene (was it riot grrrl backlash? Green Day syndrome?). I know my own experience was that other music scenes are more integrated and open, but would love to know what happened to all the girls…anyway, I could go on and on about how much I loved this zine and how important it is for this project to be supported, and I hope that it gets more women out there behind musical instruments and starting bands! (MD)
PO Box 5356 / Berkeley, CA 94705
naomiviolet@riseup.net

RAUMSCHIFF WUCHERPREIS! #19 / $3
11 x 8 – printed – 60 pgs – German
This issue has interviews with the Kinskis, Plastic Bomb, and the online fanzine *Crazy United*. There is also a report from the Poebel & Gesocks/Scumfuck vacation in Spain and North Africa, plus an excellent article about thirty years of punk in Germany. But mostly this fanzine is its usual catalogue, load of ads, with pages and pages of record reviews. If one likes German hardcore and Oi this is a great fanzine to check out. (HH)
Schmitz / Postfach 100709 / 46527 Dinslaken / Germany
www.scumfuck.de

RE/FUSE #5 / $3?
11 x 17 – newsprint – 32 pgs
For a very male-focused hardcore zine, this was definitely a worthwhile read. There is a lot of heart behind this, which comes across in the interviews and writing. The interviews are well done, with a good mix of music, personal and political questions. This issue features Converge, Fuck the Cops, and Kylesa, as well as focusing on people who are active in the scene in other ways besides being on stage (Matt Average photo essay, interviews with Mark Andersen and Richard of Underground Punk Support) and coverage of issues such as Clear Channel and veganism. There's some art thrown in for good measure. An excellent zine! Please note that the address is temporary, you may want to check the website first. (MD)
Gys Van Amelsvoort / 482 Broome St Apt 3 / New York, NY 10013
www.refusefanzine.com

RIOT 77 #10 / 4€ Europe, 5€ World
11.75 x 8.25 – printed – 52 pgs
My first thought upon opening up this zine was that my roommate Andy, who used to be really into being a skinhead and who still has a shaved head and really big boots, would probably be really into it. So he came into my room the other night and I showed it to him. His first reaction was, "Hawhaw look it's Roddy Moreno of the Oppressed on the cover!" He then flipped to an interview with The Selecter and was instantly transfixed by the black and white checkers adorning the page. His eyes stared straight into the zine, transfixed, shaking slightly, even, from his utter concentration. Maybe he was lost in the repetition of black and white squares, maybe he was staring at his reflection in the super-glossy pages of the zine. He looked up at me, his lips quivering. "I'm shrroooomin mannnnn." So much for the opinion of this issues' target audience. If you're not gonna waste this zine on a wacky mushroom trip you might wanna read it for interviews with Slim Jim Phantom, The Turbo AC's, Gold Blade, and the aforementioned bands. Also tons of record, DVD, book and live reviews. (CH)
c/o Cian Hynes / 31 St. Patricks Park / Clondalkin / Dublin 22 / Ireland



ROCKS AND BLOWS #3 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 52 pgs
Enclosed are two non-fiction stories and one fictional one. The subject matter is serious drugs, and also killing a fish. Some people won't want to read this, because they don't care what kind of shit junkies get into. Other folks won't want to read an extended treatise on the suffering of a hooked bass. I liked the stories more than I thought I would. David's not an amazing writer, but he does move the story along, and his at-times clunky phrases capture the emotion of the moment. Everything is told matter-of-factly, so I didn't get the sense of him bragging about the hard life he or his characters made for him or themselves. There's no layout to speak of; it's all writing, and I felt the quality and quantity to

be a fair deal for the money. (JM)
David Frank / 1002 W. Montrose Box 194 / Chicago, IL 60613
rocks_and_blows@yahoo.com

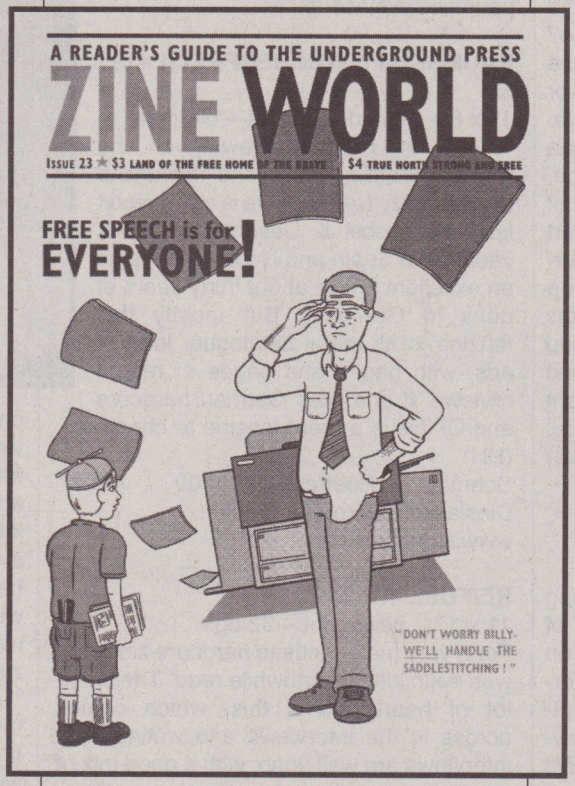
SEVEN INCHES TO FREEDOM #3 / $1
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 28 pgs
Seven Inches to Freedom is a very cool cut-n-paste, "100% computer free" punk fanzine. Awesome for not being a cliché zine—not just a bunch of boring interviews, stories and reviews. Instead, there are features on the Best Record Ever (apparently the editor has a different one each issue; this time it's a Civil Disobedience 7"), "My First Record" stories from various contributors, a round-table discussion on band promotion techniques, and a nice big article on how to start a label/distro. And yes, there are reviews (enthusiastic, well-written ones) and an article/interview/discography of the band Ebola. Totally worth the buck…keep it up, Joe! (PC)
Joe Lachut / 2163 Hoople St. / Ft. Myers, FL 33901

SPÏDDER #10 / $5
7 x 7 – copied – 36 pgs
Cool handmade zine featuring two comics. The first one, which I would describe as "cutesy," is about a cat with a scarf who travels by train to the South Pole. The second, longer one tells the story of a day in Florence, Alabama as experienced by several members of this small town's punk scene—probably elements of fact and fiction here. The art isn't very fancy and is mostly just above the level of notebook doodles, but I like comics so I was entertained anyway. *Spïdder* #10 comes with a two-song 7" by one of the author's bands called Rise Up Howlin' Warewolf. Overall, the whole thing is nicely put together with a screen-printed cover. (CS)
1925 Hwy 69 S. / Savannah, TN 38372

TOINEN VAIHTOEHTO #199 / trade
8 x 6 – printed – 32 pgs – Finnish
OK, the usual from this Finnish monthly including a band travel diary of Spain and North Africa, an in depth interview with Dolf from *Trust* fanzine, and a brief interview with the Addicts. There are also some record reviews and ads. This small fanzine is indispensable for anyone into the scene in Finland. (HH)
Po Box 1/ 65200 Vaasa / Finland
www.punkinfinland.net/tv

THE TROUBLE WITH NORMAL #80 / $1
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 56 pgs
What can you say about this zine that hasn't been said already? Yes, it is dry, and sometimes boring, but I've certainly read worse. I like the fact that there are live reviews that are more descriptive of the sound as well as the show and crowd. This issue has interviews with The Bellrays and Blackfire, lots of reviews, as well as a debate as to whether Ken Lay is really dead… (MD)
PO Box 1444 /Columbia, MO 65205-1444
www.thetroublewithnormal.tripod.com

UNDER THE VOLCANO #93 / $3.95
8.5 X 11 – printed – 56 pgs
If you love jock-y modern hardcore as much as I totally can't fucking stand it, well, you will love *Under the Volcano.* Okay, I will ignore the fact that they cover Christian hardcore bands like A Love for Enemies, Warped Tour snowboard rock like Crime in Stereo, and uncategorizable dreck like the World/Inferno Friendship Society, and for a moment focus only on the rest of the magazine: graphics, layout, overall feel. Okay, it totally sucks. (AS)
PO Box 236 / Nesconset, NY 11767



VALUE OF STRENGTH #10 / €5 + postage
8.3 x 11.7 – printed – 168 pgs
Three sittings, four hours, and I read about 75% of this (and I read pretty fast). The editor is a graphic designer by trade (successful enough to afford a house in Amsterdam?), so the layout ranges from tight and clear to jazzy with plenty of empty space. The cover is perfect bound, glossy, and looks like recent Neurosis cover art. The photos reproduced very well, and there are a lot of them. Plenty of ads and reviews as well. *Value of Strength* started many years ago as a straight edge zine, and now, well, the music coverage is similar to the (late) *Heartattack*, except *VOS* covers major label bands. The cover says it's a "hardcore magazine," but many of the CDs reviewed are praised for their "melodic emo metal," indie rock, etc. Some punk bands are interviewed, like Cursed, Rise & Fall, Plan of Attack, the Suicide File, and Breather Resist, and the editor writes up a tour diary from his trip around Europe with the Hope Conspiracy. One thing I liked is that there are a number of pages about the history of the zine and what the editor's been up to since last issue, so the zine has a lot more personality and character than many other giant music publications which set up interviews through publicists.

Also pretty cool were the vegan food reviews, where they discuss the environmental-friendliness of the packaging, and the article on vegan and cheap vs. non-vegan but environmentally better and more expensive cosmetics (they favor the latter). In short, I like the unique style this publication has maintained, so that it's still a fanzine, even though it covers corporate noise bands, ex-hardcore dudes, etc. About half of the stuff in here would fall outside *Maximum's* area of coverage, and I think *Maximum* (for all its limitations) is better off for it. (JM)
JP Frijns / PO Box 56746 / 1040 AS Amsterdam / Netherlands
www.valueofstrength.com

WELCOME TO FLAVOR COUNTRY #8 / $1
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 46pgs
Fiction zines always seem to teeter on the verge of being a little too impersonal to have any affect on you, or they are obviously autobiographical to the point of why are you even pretending this is not your damn diary. Do people write fiction in zines because they do not want to reveal too much? Is it because "perzine" (totally *not* a fucking word) sucks completely as a definition? I felt compelled by a story about the alienation of the internet, but a little put off by the confederate soldier day in the life. There's some heavy themes like death and the worthlessness of living, fantasies about small decisions that change your life forever, mystical unkillable wildlife, and day-to-day fuck everybody kind of talk. The writer claims that if you've "ever felt yourself dying on a daily basis, this zine is for you." There ya go. (JB)
Kurt Morris / 8820 Stone Ave. N #301 / Seattle, WA 98103

ZINE WORLD #23 / $3
8.5 x 11 – printed – 48 pgs
A zine with lots of reviews of other zines alongside correspondence from angry zinesters who probably disagreed with the nature of the review of their zine in a prior issue. This is the free speech issue so there is also some editorial writing about freedom of the press and our government's habit of poking their nose into aspects of people's lives that aren't meant to be part of their jurisdiction. (LG)
Zine World / PO Box 330156 / Murfreesboro TN 37133

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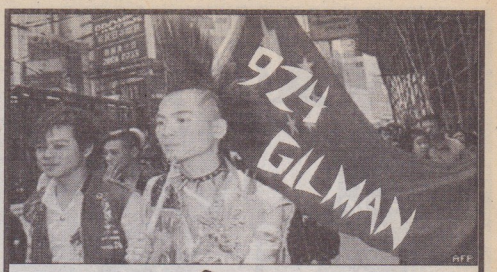

October

Friday 6 • $5
Decry (L.A.) • Retching Red • Z.B.S.
Miscreants • Skinned Alive

Saturday 7 • $5
Love Equals Death • Lucky Stiffs
Sugar Eater • The Secret Station • Set Off

Sunday 8 • $7 • 5pm Show
7 Generations (L.A.)
Eye of Judgement (Netherlands)
Gather • Time For Change (L.A.)
Defiant Voice

Saturday 14 • $7
Onion Flavored Rings • Peelander-Z (Japan)
Boom Boom Kid (Argentina, ex-Fun People)
Ghost Mice (WA) • Matty Pop Chart (WA)

Friday 20
Life Long Tragedy
Silence Kills The Revolution (Japan)
Robot Eyes (OR) • Gunsmoke • Modern Eyes

Saturday 21
Arnocorps (Austria) • Smogtown (L.A.)
Reagan SS (L.A.)
Rock'n'Roll Adventure Kids • Parasites Go!

Sunday 22 • $7 • 5pm Show
Ceremony • The First Step (NC)
The Helm (WA) • Bad Reaction (L.A.)

Halloween Weekend

Friday 27
Trainwreck Riders • Genghis Khan
Rum & Rebellion • The Achievement

Saturday 28
Minor Threat • Youth Of Today • Negative Approach • Dead Kennedys • Circle Jerks
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November

Friday 3 • ska show
Monkey • Flip The Switch
Dan Potthast (acoustic) • Issue 10

Saturday 4
Resistant Culture (L.A.) • A.D.T.
Eskapo • Flatbush (L.A.) • Masacre

Friday 10 • $7
Lights Out • Have Heart (MA)
Sinking Ships (WA) • Lion of Judah (D.C.)

Friday 17
Jason Webley (WA)
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Saturday 25
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